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JOHN ROBINSON
THE PILGRIM PASTOR
HIS POLITY AND THEOLOGY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
M. Jerry Davis

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This dissertation, written by

Morten Jerry Davis

*under the direction of his Faculty Committee,
and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
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requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF RELIGION

Faculty Committee

K. H. [unclear]
Floyd H. Ross

Date

June 1967

F. Thomas Twitt
Dean

Preface

The student interested in understanding the origins of the religious and political structures and attitudes which have held the dominant position in the United States from the arrival of the first colonists until the present may find his search rewarded by an investigation of the John Robinson materials.

Robinson, though a pastor, applied what he considered the best of church organization to the establishment of the local government in his suggestion to the departing Pilgrim Fathers that the political affairs of their colony ought to be ordered in a manner similar to the congregational organization of their church. Political theory was not Robinson's chief concern, but in this case it indicates his characteristic efforts to structure religious endeavor into a pattern conducive to the honor, dignity, and maturity of every participant. Robinson believed that whatever served the will of divinity met the highest needs of man.

Robinson's views constitute a chief cornerstone of Congregational polity and as such have had considerable influence on the political thought which has guided the American tradition. Robinson believed that the plan was not only expedient, but also in harmony with the true nature of man as a reasonable creature--the highest object of God's creation.

Robinson's theological persuasion was Calvinism but his human attitude was universalism. His ministry offers the example of conviction balanced by tolerance, of determination softened by sympathy.

He counted England his homeland but his constitution was the law of heaven. His book was the Bible and its teachings his first concern.

Robinson shepherded a little flock through a perilous time. His ministry transformed a small and insignificant band of Puritans and Separatists into a creative society which has left its mark both on the world of faith and the world of politics. This project is undertaken in the hope of gaining a feeling for the concerns which motivated him and an understanding of the attitudes which compelled him to leave every comfort and security in the hope of both finding and creating a new society in which every man might breathe a bit deeper and freer of the spirit which first gave life to man.

The most convenient repository of John Robinson materials is Robert Ashton's 1851 edition of his works. Mr. Ashton includes Robinson's books, manuscripts and letters and an extensive biographical section with a genealogical summary. The University of Michigan microfilm collection of rare books includes a number of the more significant materials, though adding nothing to Ashton except availability. William Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation (1657? Published 1856) offers some data. Edward Winslow's Hypocrisy Unmasked, 1646, presents a recollection of Robinson's farewell address twenty-five years following its delivery.

Robinson's major biographer is Walter H. Burgess in John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, 1920. Also of note are the works of Ozora Davis and Frederick J. Powicke. Henry Martyn Dexter gives a chapter to John Robinson in his monumental The Congregationalism of the Last Three-Hundred Years, 1880. Champlain Burrage

published New Facts Concerning John Robinson in 1910 as a result of certain observations regarding an answer to John Robinson by an anonymous distracter.

I am indebted to Dr. Leland H. Carlson who introduced me to the study of John Robinson and has graciously guided me through this project. Dr. K. Morgan Edwards and Dr. Floyd Ross have given freely of their time and assistance in the reading and correcting of the manuscript. The work could not have progressed without the courteous efforts of the staffs of the Library of the School of Theology at Claremont, the Honnold Library of the Claremont Colleges, the Henry E. Huntington Library at San Marino, and the patience of the Library of the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School.

Credit for the transformation of notes and copy into the manuscript form belongs to Mrs. Doris Kihara. Not to be omitted from the record is my appreciation to wife and family who have endured without jealousy my attentions to the mistress of research through the duration of this project.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO JOHN ROBINSON

John Robinson was born in the midst of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the last monarch whose temperament and sagacity allowed her to maintain the Erastian relationship between the church and the state. He had the rare privilege of seeing the enactment of his ecclesiastical philosophy in the establishment of the Plymouth colony by the saints of his Leyden congregation.

Robinson's ideas and ideals were by no means unique to himself. Some of his views on matters of church polity were shared by Presbyterians, Puritans and Precisians both prior to and following his statement of them. The importance of his position rests upon the fact that his placement in time forced him to make decisions which resulted in the living expression of his principles.

He was not allowed the luxury of presenting his views without the necessity of putting them into practice. Neither imprisonment nor martyrdom offered him an easy escape from the task of vindicating his beliefs. He moved with ease from his birthplace at Sturton-le Steeple in Nottinghamshire through the ivied halls of Corpus Christi College Cambridge to St. Andrew's Parish in Norwich. Once there, conviction began to hinder the freedom of relationship which had marked his earlier career. It became apparent that he must either follow his conscience or abandon it. To the great good fortune of the free church in both England and America he chose to follow it.

It was in Norwich that Robinson first experienced the wrath of the curate. He accepted a position as the pastor of a congregation with a long Puritan tradition.¹ Tenets of religious freedom had been nourished in Norwich by both the refugees from the Netherlands who had fled religious persecution by the Catholics, and by the native Englishmen who had formed the congregations of such independents as Robert Browne,² Robert Harrison, John More, and William Perkins. The contribution of the religious refugees was not only spiritual but also financial. Among their numbers were many skilled weavers and tradesmen. Their commercial enterprises helped Norwich assume a position of commercial importance second only to London. The fiscal prosperity and intellectual hospitality of the city produced an atmosphere in which freedom of thought flourished. It was only natural that clergymen of Puritan leanings would be attracted to Norwich, but their concentration also made them the more susceptible to the penalties imposed upon those who failed to conform to the Proclamation of 1604.³

¹Additional information relative to both the commercial ecclesiastical situation in Norwich may be found in the following biographies of John Robinson: Ozora S. Davis, John Robinson the Pilgrim Pastor (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1903), pp. 68, 69; and Walter H. Burgess, John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers (London: Williams and Norgate, 1920), pp. 58-66.

²Dwight C. Smith, "Robert Browne, Independent," Church History, VI (1963), 289-348. A comprehensive discussion of the history and contribution of Robert Browne and the Separatist tradition.

³On March 5, 1604, shortly after the Hampton Court Conference, James I authorized a proclamation requiring conformity to the Book of Common Prayer. The complete canon may be found in H. A. Wilson, Constitutions and Canons (London: Clarendon Press, 1923). The article in question, number XIV, may be found in the appendix. James considered it the "chiefest of all kingly duties; . . . to settle the affairs of

Robinson's refusal to conform to the Proclamation resulted in his suspension from the Episcopal ministry. When he first learned of his suspension, he submitted to the authority of the church but soon acknowledged that what it asked was wrong and that to participate was evil. John and Bridget Robinson returned to Nottinghamshire and Sturton-le Steeple, not to rest but to find satisfaction for their troubled hearts. They found others perplexed by similar concerns in their immediate neighborhood.⁴

religion" He charged them with "using forms of public serving of God not here allowed"; and said they, "held assemblies without authority"; and "did other things, carrying a very apparent shew of sedition." At the Hampton Court Conference no reason had been found to alter the doctrines, forms or rites of the Book of Common Prayer since all were held to be justified by the practices of the primitive church. A new printing of the book was ordered and each church was to obtain a copy. The Proclamation was brought forth on July 16 and all Archbishops, Bishops and public ministers were required to see that it was enforced. Puritans were given until November 30 to conform. The Bishops were to see that dissenting clergymen were removed and that conformists be appointed to all vacant benefices. On December 4, Richard Bancroft was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury and on December 10 the Privy Council ordered him to proceed against those non-conformists who refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the king, and the complete accordance of the Book of Common Prayer and the thirty-nine Articles of Faith with the scriptures. A provision was made whereby clergymen who would not accept the proclamation in principle, but who would conform to its practice, would retain their benefices. However, a number of separatist clergymen refused conformity and thus lost their livings. Stuart Babbage compares the accounts of the deprivations of ministers and presents evidence that the actual number amounted to 60-100 out of a possible 10,000 clergymen. Stuart Barton Babbage, Puritanism and Richard Bancroft (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), pp. 147-219. Cf. John Strype, The Life and Acts of John Whitgift (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1823), II, 519-526; and Samuel R. Gardiner, History of England (London: Longmans, Green, 1895), I, 195-199. Cf. William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 381, footnote reference #1. Cf. Roland G. Usher, "The Deprivation of Puritan Ministers in 1605," The English Historical Review, XXIV (1909), 232-246. Usher defends the traditional number of three hundred deprived ministers.

⁴"At Gainsborough John Smith had been checked in his efforts to minister helpfully to the parishioners in the absence of their vicar;

Henry VIII's defiance of the Pope and the establishment of the Church of England had removed the state from the domination of the Roman Church. For the Separatist, however, the domination of the church by the state was equally intolerable. Both theocracy as practised by the papacy, and Erastianism as pursued by Queen Elizabeth had thwarted the development of spiritual interests. Since neither the law of the church, nor the law of the land allowed a place for a "free church," the machinery of the Ecclesiastical Commission was set in motion to crush the movement before it overcame the system. A plaintive section

at Scrooby, William Brewster had organized house-meetings for religious conference and worship in the Manor house, which he occupied; at Babworth Richard Clifton was bringing trouble on himself by refusal to observe the ceremonies of the Church; at Worksop there was agitation against Episcopal requirements, and of prospect of independent action on the part of the pious and energetic vicar, Richard Bernard. The Puritan clergy were restive under the demand made upon them to acknowledge the lawfulness of the ceremonies and the requirement to observe them to the letter. The whole question of the nature and constitution of the Christian Church according to Scriptural teaching was being passed in review." Burgess, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68. Cf. Benjamin Scott, "Birthplace of American Liberties," The Congregational Quarterly, IX (1867), 263. "This remote hamlet of Nottinghamshire, adjacent to the borders of Yorkshire, which now echoes to the whistle of the Great Northern Railway,--here, in the Old Manor House of Scrooby (the outline of whose moat may still be seen from the platform of the station), this ancient hunting-seat of the Archbishop of York, the resting-place of Queen Margaret of Scotland, daughter of Henry VII., on her journey to Scotland, in 1503,--here, where disappointed Wolsey retired after his fall, to discover too late that fidelity to God brings a higher and more certain blessing than the most devoted fidelity to an earthly king,--here, where Wolsey's royal rival, Henry, passed a night in 1541,--here, where James the First solicited of the Archbishop 'that he might take his royal pastime in the Forest of Sherwood,'--in this very Manor House, or in one of its offices, met the simple, humble Separatist worshipers, Robinson, Brewster, and Bradford, the leaders of the Pilgrim band, and the founders of the civil and religious liberties of America." Cf. Henry M. Dexter, "Recent Discoveries Concerning the Plymouth Pilgrims," The Congregational Quarterly, IV (1862), 58-66. Here Dexter presents information concerning the location of the Pilgrims' last English residence and their location in Leyden. Cf. J. M. Hoppin, "Scrooby,"

from William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation describes the situation.

But after these things they could not long continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as flea-bitings in comparison of these which now came upon them. For some were taken and clapped up in prison, others had their houses beset and watched day and night, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to flee and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood.

Yet these and many other sharper things which afterwards befell them, were no other than they looked for, and therefore were the better prepared to bear them by the assistance of God's grace and spirit.⁵

Robinson and his friends left their familiar homeland for the foreign but friendlier Netherlands. Awaiting the demise of the king's wrath and the subsidence of the indignation of the Church, he lifted his pen to answer critics and exposed his concerns to the judgment of the reading public.

I. WHAT MAKES A CHURCH?

As Robinson displayed his views and attempted to refute the charges against the separatist churches, he not only answered objections in a careful and minute manner, but he also proceeded to demonstrate that his critics often stood condemned by the very texts they cited to substantiate their positions.

The Congregational Quarterly, IV (1862), 356-359. Mr. Hoppin adds the recollections of a recent visit to the Scrooby site to the observations of Dexter in the article referred to above.

⁵William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 10. Cf. Roland A. Marchant, The Puritans and the Church Courts in The Diocese of York, 1560-1642 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1960), p. 166. Marchant presents evidence suggesting that Bradford has overstated the actual situation.

One of the hallmarks of the Puritan position was their insistence upon the literality and validity of the scriptures in establishing their position on every subject. Robinson was first and foremost a man of the Bible. He enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with its teachings and personalities. His writings, his few and fragmentary sermons, and his letters are prefaced and interlaced with scripture.

The Puritans declared that a church was formed when the conditions of Matthew 18:20 were fulfilled, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." He believed that even a company of only two or three separated from the world and gathered in the name of Christ, which covenanted to walk in all the ways of God made known to man was truly a church. This position he attempted to prove in the following order:⁶

- 1) Two or three or more people making Peter's confession, Matthew 16:16, are the church. But two or three or more may make this confession without officers. Therefore such a company is a church.
- 2) If the New Testament speak of ordaining elders in the church, then doth it necessarily conclude, yea expressly affirm, that there were churches before elders were ordained in them.
- 3) . . . God is said (I Cor. 12:28) to have appointed or set in the church apostles, prophets, teachers, necessarily implying a

⁶ A single point should be borne in mind as the writings of John Robinson are studied. His writings do not represent solely his own views and attitudes, but often are attempts to disprove what he considered to be false charges, or to defend a position which the separatist church had taken. Many of his writings tend to create the feeling that they are apologetic and defensive rather than the positive presentation of a confident mind. While presenting his views on the constitution of the true church he is at the same time trying to refute the error that it is the officers which make the church. Thus he spends almost equal time telling the reader what he does not believe as he does stating his beliefs.

church before, wherein they were appointed: as a sheriff appointed in a shire, a mayor in a city, a constable in a parish, a steward in a family, do necessarily presuppose the shire, city, parish, family, wherein they are appointed. And indeed where should the Lord set his stewards but in the family? Is any society capable of the Lord's officers but his corporation? Is not the eldership an ordinance given to the church? and so the elders called the elders of the church. The church is not an ordinance given to the elders, nor ever called their church in the whole New Testament.

4) They with whom the Lord makes his covenant to be their God, and to have them his people, to dwell amongst them as in his temple, which have right to the promises of Christ, and to his presence, they are the church of God, and of Christ.

But a company of faithful people, though they have no officers amongst them, may be received into covenant with God, may be his temple, and have him dwell amongst them, may have right to Christ and to his promises, and presence; For they that separate themselves from unbelievers, may be the temple of God, that is the true visible church, which the temple typed out.

In the midst of his logical arguments, Robinson penned a beautiful statement concerning the constitution of the true church of God:

Men are not to come out of Babylon, and there to stand still, and remember the Lord afar off, but must resort to the place where he hath put his name, for which they need not go either to Jerusalem, or to Rome, or beyond the seas; they may find Sion the Lord's mountain prepared on the top of every hill. If they as lively stones couple themselves together by voluntary profession and covenant, they are a spiritual building, the Lord's temple.

5) If a company of faithful people without officers be not a church, then if all the officers of a church should die or fall away, the church should be nullified, and become no church; and to come nearer home (granting for a while the parish of Worksop to be a company of faithful people) if Mr. Bernard⁷ should leave his

⁷When Robinson returned from Norwich to Sturton-le Steeple, he and others of like persuasion joined in a study group. (See footnote 4, page 3) One of the participants was Richard Bernard, Vicar of Worksop. When the time came for an open separation from the Church of England, Bernard became a strenuous opponent of the aims and policies of the Separatists. He recognized the corruption of the Church of England but did not think it justified the extreme step of separation. When a number of Bernard's parishioners followed the Separatists, he raised a hue and cry against them. Richard Bernard, Christian

vicarage for a better, then the church of Worksop should be dis-churched, and remain a church no longer: and thus an assembly might be churched and unchurchd, and churchd again every week in time of persecution or plague, by having and losing, and recovering again her officers: and thus the officers should not be the eyes or tongue of the body, for the body remains a true, though an imperfect, body without them, but the head of it: yea the pope though he hold himself the head of the church, yet acknowledgeth it a church without him, and in time of vacancy.⁸

Advertisements and Counsels of Peace (London: Felix Kyngston, 1608). The sub-title gives a full explanation of the purpose of the book, "Disuasions from the Separatist's Schism, commonly called Brownisme, which is set apart from such truths as they take from us and other Reformed Churches, and is nakedly discovered, so that the falsity thereof may be better discerned, and so justly condemned, and wisely avoided. Published for the Benefit of the Humble and Godlie Lovers of the Trueth." In response to this work, Henry Ainsworth penned Counterpoyson (Amsterdam: 1608), and John Smith wrote Parallels, Censures, and Observations (1609). Robinson, feeling that Bernard had not been properly refuted, prepared a third response, A Justification of Separation from the Church of England Against Mr. Richard Bernard His Invective Intituled The Separatist's Schisme (Leydon?: 1610). Before finishing the work he received Bernard's answer to Ainsworth and Smyth, entitled, Plaine Evidences: The Church of England is Apostolicall; the Separation Schismaticall (T. Snodham, F. E. Weaver, A. W. Welby, 1610). In A Justification Robinson refers to Bernard's works as the first and second books.

⁸John Robinson, The Works of John Robinson, ed. Robert Ashton (London: John Snow, 1851), II, 133-136. Robinson's description or definition of the true church rings with the tone of the earlier Puritan definitions. John Greenwood penned similar words in his "The True and False Church" in 1588; "The true planted and rightlie established church of Christ is a companie of faithful people; separated from the unbelievers and heathen of the land; gathered in the name of Christ, whom they trulie worship, and redily obey as their own king, priest, and prophet; joyned together as members of one body; ordered and governed by such officers and lawes as Christ in his last will and testament hath thereunto ordeyned"; John Greenwood, The Writings of John Greenwood (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), p. 98. The following year, Henry Barrow summarized his view in "A True Description Out of the Worde of God," "it consisteth of a companie and fellowship of faithful and holie people gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, their only king, priest, and prophet, worshipping him aright, being peaceable and quietlie governed by his officers and lawes, keeping the unitie of faith in the bonde of peace and love unfained." Henry Barrow, The Writings of Henry Barrow (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), p. 214. The major difference between the Puritan statement and the position of

The feud between Robinson and the establishment on this point may be summarized by stating that he denied that an "assembly of profane and ungodly persons, under the government of a provincial or diocesan Bishop and the ministry of a dumb priest,"⁹ constituted a church.

Robinson dwells long upon the point and repeats it often. It is the ground upon which a number of other positions are based and shows his "detestation of the insufferable pride of this prelacy, and priesthood, which will have the very life of all churches hang on the breath of their nostrils."¹⁰

Robinson considered officers an added embellishment to the church which the members could add when necessary and remove if desirable. They were an "adjunct, not for the being, but for the well-being, of the church and furtherance of her faith by their service."¹¹

He further suggested that the significant thing was not the size of the congregation but the purpose for which they were gathered and their sincerity in joining one another; two or three having the same right as two or three hundred. He reminded the reader that when the

the Anglican advocate Richard Hooker involved the matter of separation. Hooker stated that the church, ". . . is a Society; that is, a number of men belonging to some Christian fellowship, the place and limits whereof are certain. That wherein they have communion is the public exercise of such duties as those mentioned in the Apostles' Acts, 'instruction, breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:42).'" Richard Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865), Book III, Chapter i, 14.

⁹Robinson, Works, II, 136.

¹⁰Ibid., II, 136-137.

¹¹Ibid., II, 137.

Lord chose a nation, he chose the smallest of all nations.¹² In Matthew 14, Christ opened a way for all nations--a narrow way which few would be able to find. He likened the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed which though small could be expected to increase abundantly. Thus there was nothing unusual about a small group claiming Christ's promise that his presence and power would be given to two or three who gathered in his name. His three points pertaining to this belief may be summarized as follows:

1) If the company of faithful people be the true church, then they may freely enjoy the order which Christ prescribed without any foreign ministers or mediators.

2) Every faithful company has received Christ and the power to enjoy him, though all the world be against it.

3) The relationship between Christ and his church is like that between the vine and the branches, the sap is drawn immediately. . . . every true and visible church of Christ has immediate interest and title to Christ himself and the whole New Testament, and every ordinance of it, without any unnatural, monstrous, and adulterous interposition by any person whatsoever.¹³

Robinson searched the scriptures but found no hint of a national church replacing the monarchy of Israel. The New Testament seemed to confirm only the local congregation, separate and independent of the world and self-sufficient as it depended upon Christ alone.¹⁴

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., II, 138.

¹⁴Henry Ainsworth's Counterpoison presented clearly the idea that separation from all evil was the first responsibility of the true church. He pointed out (page 3) that in the beginning God had proclaimed a perpetual enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman. On page 37 he points to the numerous separations in the scriptures--Seth's posterity from Cain's; Abraham called out of Chaldee; Lot from Sodom and Israel from Egypt. His thought is summarized in a sentence, "You would not

Membership in the church was not a matter of natural occurrence. Men were prepared for membership by the preaching of the Word. By hearing the Word, they became stones for God's building and thereby joined in covenant together by voluntary and personal profession of faith and confession of sins. Robinson noted that such a procedure was completely foreign to the practices of the Church of England.

In the opinion of the Separatists, the Church of England skipped completely the preaching of the Word which was intended to gather the people together. Anglican priests usually followed the Book of Common Prayer rather than the Scriptures, and used its homilies rather than their own. Even in the churches where the Word was best taught, Robinson contended that both the Word and the sacraments were abused rather than used by the people.

The two qualifications held forth by Separatists for church membership were faith and repentance. These two doctrines were preached by Christ, John the Baptist before him, and by the apostles after him. They were required of all who sought membership in the Christian Church. Faith and repentance are inward feelings, not subject to ready identification or display. It was therefore difficult to determine whether a person really possessed these virtues which would make him fit for membership. If a person when presenting himself for membership gave evidence of his faith through participation with the group and appeared to lead a godly life, he was accepted into the church. The church was

call our separation strange, if your self were not a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel." Ainsworth, Counterpoyson, pp. 3, 37.

to exercise judgment in matters of membership, but that judgment was to be charitable.¹⁵

If when a person presented himself for membership he manifested none of these qualities and was a person of lewd conversation and appearing to retain all sins, he was to be denied membership in spite of his profession. According to the requirements of the Church of England, such a person could readily be admitted. Robinson commented on their procedure:

This were to make the way of the kingdom of heaven broad enough by which all the atheists in the world might enter into the church, and certainly would everyone of them, if the magistrate should use his compulsive power, as it is in England at this day: yea a parrot might be taught to say over so many words, yea the devil himself, though he were known so to be, would not stick for his advantage to utter them, and so might be true matter for Mr. B's Bernard's church.¹⁶

¹⁵Richard Hooker noted the difficulty of determining exactly who the actual members of the visible church were. He said, "They who are of this society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not object unto our sense; only unto God, who seeth their hearts and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto him they are clear and manifest" (Hooker, op. cit., Book III, Chap. i.2). He continues, "The visible church of Jesus Christ is therefore one, in outward profession of those things, which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of Christianity, and are necessarily required in every particular Christian man. But we speak now of the visible Church, whose children are signed with this mark, 'One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.'" Ibid., Book III, Chap. i.4,7.

¹⁶Robinson, Works, II, 285. Hooker had given utterance to the open door policy of the Anglican Church in his third book, ". . . we must acknowledge even heretics themselves to be, though a maimed part, yet a part of the visible Church. If an infidel should pursue to death an heretic professing Christianity, only for Christian profession's sake, could we deny unto him the honor or martyrdom? Yet this honor all men know to be proper to the Church. Heretics therefore are not utterly cut off from the visible Church of Christ" (Hooker, op. cit., Book III, Chap. i.11). He further pointed out that Christ had compared his church to the net which drew all manner of things other than fish, and to a field in which tares grew with the corn.

Robinson noted that a different principle had been evoked in the construction of the Lord's temporal house by Solomon and he believed that it came nearer the requirements for the spiritual house. The temple had been built with costly stones, of special trees, each having a particular design. All things were prepared outside the temple site so that neither hammer nor axe, nor the sound of any tool, would be heard within the building. Porters were set by the gate so that no unclean thing might enter or be offered on the altar. Thus Robinson asked:

And is any rubbish and riffraff now good enough for this spiritual house and temple of God, the church, whereof the material temple was but a carnal shadow? May the porters, the officers, let into it, the clean, and unclean, without difference? May dogs and swine, and all unclean beasts and birds promiscuously be offered upon the altar we have in our spiritual tabernacle? God forbid.

Yea whosoever shall bring me this doctrine, that a man of known wicked conversation, without such appearance of repentance, as the church by the word of God, and rule of charity, is to judge true, may, by warrant of the word, or practice of the apostles, be received, and admitted into the church, by the prattling of a verbal confession. I will hold that man, yea, though he were an angel from heaven, accursed.¹⁷

The requirement for membership in the Church of England was not a voluntary profession of faith and open repentance as taught by the apostles. It was a matter depending upon the location of one's house. Robinson bewailed the condition:

A man may go out of these countries where I now live [Leyden], as many do, and hire a house in any parish of the land; he is by the right of his house, or farm, a member of the parish church, where he dwells, yea, though he have been nursled up all his life long in Popery or Atheism, and though he were formerly neither of any church, or religion. Yea, though he should profess that he did

¹⁷Robinson, Works, II, 286.

not look to be saved by Christ only, and alone, but by his good meanings, and well doings, yet if he will come, and hear divine service, he is matter true as steel for your church; yea be he of the king's natural subjects, he shall, by order of law, be made true member of the church, whether he will or no.¹⁸

It is apparent that the thinking of the separatist movement revealed a change in attitude regarding the purpose of the church, how it should function, and what should be accomplished by it. For the Separatists, the church was not an arm of the state, the domain of prelates, or the sanctuary of a foreign power. The church was rather a group of people who bound themselves together because of their common faith with the hope that each might be of some aid to the other. In a secondary sense, the church was a place, a situation, an opportunity and an aid toward their continued spiritual progress. Thus we may also note a move from expediency to utility as they attempted to form churches which could best accomplish these goals. With the purpose of preparing a foundation for growth, communion, fellowship, continued learning and development, Robinson prepared a chapter in his Just and Necessary Apology on "The Largeness of Churches." Here he stated, "We . . . so judge that no particular church under the New Testament, ought to consist of more members that can meet together in one place."¹⁹

To support his view he lists three points:

- 1) The Holy Scriptures speaking definitely of the political, or ministerial, commonly called, visible church, instituted by Christ, and his apostles, by his power, understand none other than one congregation convening, and coming together, ordinary at least in one place "When ye therefore come together in one," to wit,

¹⁸Ibid., II, 288.

¹⁹Ibid., III, 13.

place, not mind, as some conceit, for from that the Corinthians were too far.

2) There is then had the most full, and perfect communion of the body in the holy things of God, which is the next and immediate end of the visible church, when all the members thereof do convene, and assemble together in some one place, Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25.

3) In these huge and vast flocks, the governors cannot take knowledge of the manners of the people, private or public; no, nor so much as of their presence at, or absence from the church assemblies. I conclude therefore, since as Junius²⁰ saith, "It concerneth the pastor thoroughly to know the church committed unto him, the persons, their works and courses, without the knowledge of which things, he shall profit them no more than a tinkling cymbal."²¹

Robinson added an additional requirement to the belief that a church consisted of a congregation which met in one place at one time-- that of having one pastor. In his opinion it was unlawful for a man to execute the pastoral office except in the church over which he was set:

²⁰Franciscus Junius, Ecclesiastici sive de Natura et administrationibus ecclesiae Dei, Libri tres, nunc primum conscripti, atque in lucem editi (Heidelbergae: 1581), Vol. I, Chap. 2. Junius, 1545-1602, was born of good parents in Bourges, France. He began his education with the study of law. At the age of fifteen he secured a position in the retinue of the French ambassador to Constantinople. He missed the ambassador's party in Lyons and stayed there to study rather than joining him. When war threatened, he returned to Bourges and went from there to study for a life of service to the Church in Geneva. There his reputation for learning earned him a teaching position. In 1565 he became a pastor of a Walloon congregation in Antwerp. From 1573 to 1578, he was at Heidelberg assisting Tremellius in his Latin version of the Old Testament. The last years of his life were spent in Leyden where he held a chair of theology. Junius was a learned and pious man of a liberal vein in an age largely illiberal. Eleven years following his death his Opera Theologica Francisci Junii Biturgis in two volumes was published in Geneva. For further information see the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th Edition (New York: Werner, 1897), XIII, 778. For an exchange of letters between Franciscus Junius and Francis Johnson's exiled church at Amsterdam see Franciscus Junius, Certain Letters translated into English being written in Latin (1602).

²¹Robinson, Works, III, 13, 15.

It is not lawful for thee, reverend brother, to do the work of a pastor where thou art no pastor, lest thou arrogate to thyself that honor, which appertaineth not unto thee. Thou art called, that is, elected, and ordained a pastor of some particular church, and not of all churches.²²

Robinson believed that the clergy had only the authority given them by the congregation which they served. He illustrated his position by suggesting that a citizen of one town could exercise certain rights in another town of the same republic, but that the magistrate of Leyden had no ruling authority in Delft.

The "true" church was one called from the world and separated from it as scripture indicated. To conceive of the church, the Body of Christ and the household of God, not separated from the profane world which lieth in darkness and wickedness is to confound Belial with Christ or to mix truth with the most dangerous of error. He pointed out that often both the wicked and the profane would frequent the church although both were not truly of the church. The church that gave membership to the profane stood in clear violation of the principle of separation. Anglican proponents had to admit that many of their members and clergy had serious uncorrected faults. Since no disciplinary action was taken against these individuals, the Separatists necessarily assumed that their behavior was not a serious concern to the church. Such assumptions prompted him to give the following warning:

Let all of them, then, that fear God, know and consider, that when they come to worship in the parish assemblies, they join themselves where God hath not joined them, and acknowledge that society for the true church of God, and communion of saints, which he hath not sanctified for that purpose; that they offer their solemn

²²Ibid., III, 16.

sacrifices out of the true temple, made of lively stones, where alone they should present them; that in eating of one bread, they make themselves one body with them, and them members of Christ, who are, for the present, apparent limbs of Satan; and that, in saying "Our Father" with them, they acknowledge them for the children of God, who, in the persuasion of their own consciences, are of their father the devil, and do his lusts.²³

II. THE PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Similar trends and themes tend to appear and reappear throughout the writings of John Robinson. They often appear under varying titles and headings. One such theme concerns the privileges and responsibilities which are implied by church membership. A privilege of the church member was the election of church officers whose duty it was to serve, not to be served by the local church. With the privilege went the responsibility of disciplining erring members whether they be officers or laymen.

In contrast, popular opinion regarded the church as an arm of the state and accepted a similar form of government in the church as that which governed the state, which included a ruler whose rights and power are assumed, not by virtue of his goodness but by the mere authority of his office. When the state and the church were linked together it was taken for granted that each would use the authority of the other. The state could sanction its activities by claiming the blessing of the church and the church could reinforce its dogmas with the strong arm of the state. In a tart sentence, Robinson stated the contrasting

²³Ibid., III, 130.

separatist viewpoint which depreciated the significance of the officers: "But so far are the officers from being the formal cause of the church, as is intended, as they are, in truth, no absolutely necessary appurtenance unto it."²⁴

He further stated that the obligation of the officers was to serve the church, and that the privilege of enjoying the benefits of the service of the officers was God-given:

. . . because the church is essentially in the saints, as the matter, subject, formed by the covenant, unto which the officers are but adjuncts, not making for the being, but for the well-being of the church, and furtherance of her faith, by their service.²⁵

Robinson summarized his position concerning the rights and opportunities of the church separated from the world into the purity of Christ and his truth in three paragraphs:

If a company of faithful people, though without officers, be the true church and body of Christ, and Israel of God, then to that company appertains the covenant of promise, the oracles of God are committed unto them, and to them are given his word, statutes, and judgments: and so they may freely enjoy them amongst themselves in the order by Christ prescribed, without any foreign ministers, for mediators.

They that have received Christ have received the power of Christ, and his whole power, for Christ and his power are not divided, nor one part of his power for another.

The relationship between the church and the member was often illustrated by the parable of the vine and the branch. The branch takes part with the root immediately and every resource of the root is immediately available to the branch. Similarly the resources of the husband are open to the use of the wife at her discretion:

²⁴Ibid., II, 137.

²⁵Ibid.

So hath every true visible church of Christ direct, and immediate interest in, and title to Christ himself, and the whole New Testament and every ordinance in it, without any unnatural, monstrous and adulterous interposition by any person whatsoever, betwixt the vine and the branches, the head and the body, the husband and the wife: which are Christ and his Church, though but two or three gathered in his name, as hath formerly been manifested.²⁶

Robinson attempted to show that the separatist form of church government had drawn the best elements from several systems of ecclesiastical polity just as man draws life and spirit from not one but several sources:

. . . as man being the perfection of all creatures, comprehends in his nature what is excellent in them all: having being with the elements, life with the plants, sense with the beasts, and with the angels reason.²⁷

He then moved the matter from a man to the church. He pointed out that wise men had described three forms of government--monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. In these forms, the monarch takes power into his own hands, the aristocracy places it into the hands of a select few and democracy places it in the hands of all. Regarding the church he stated: "And all these three forms have their place in the church of Christ. In respect of Him the head, it is a monarchy, in respect of the eldership, an aristocracy, in respect of the body, a popular state."²⁸

He also noted the ministry of Christ was threefold--a king, a priest, and a prophet. He concluded that Christ's ministry was also passed on to the members of the church. Every member was a king, a

²⁶Ibid., II, 139.

²⁷Ibid., II, 140.

²⁸Ibid.

priest, and a prophet, not only for himself but for every other member.

A prophet to teach, exhort, reprove and comfort himself and the rest; a priest, to offer up spiritual sacrifices or prayer, praises, and thanksgiving, for himself and the rest; a king to guide and govern in the ways of godliness, himself and the rest.²⁹

The democratic form of church government in no way obviated the need for leadership and authority within the church. To the contrary, if a group of kings should assemble for the discussion of matters of concern, one would be selected to assume the role of leader or moderator both for order and for the special assistance of the whole. Robinson suggested that the church had a similar need for leadership and then qualified it:

. . . so in this royal assembly, the church of Christ, though all be kings, yet some both most faithful and most able, are to be set over the rest; and that in office, not kingly but ministerial, because the assembly is constant, wherein they are both deeply charged and effectually encouraged to minister according to the testament of Christ, and that not only for comliness and order, (as Mr. B., p. 90), slandereth us to hold; but for profit, edification, yea and salvation of the church . . .³⁰

Robinson bemoaned the fact that the established church sought to rule in a manner similar to that followed by the civil government. He attempted to enumerate several differences between the secular and the sacred government:

1) Civil officers receive titles like prince, captain, judge, magistrate, noble, lord and king,

²⁹Ibid., II, 140.

³⁰Ibid., II, 141.

. . . but on the contrary, ecclesiastical officers are not capable of these, or like titles, which can neither be given without flattery unto them, nor received by them without arrogancy; neither is their office an office of lordship, sovereignty, or authority, but of labor and service, and so they are labourers and servants of the church, as of God.

2) Magistrates may publish and execute their own laws in their own names. But ministers are only interpreters of the laws of God, and must look for no further respect at the hands of any to the things they speak, than as they manifest the same to be the commandments of the Lord.

3) Civil administrations, and their forms of government may be, and oftentimes are, altered for the avoiding of inconveniences, according to the circumstances of time, place and persons. But the church is a kingdom which cannot be shaken, wherein may be no innovation in office, or form of administration from that which Christ hath left, for any inconvenience whatsoever.

4) Civil magistrates have authority, by their offices, to judge offenders, upon whom they may also execute bodily vengeance . . . but the church can only state its disapproval and remove the erring member from its midst.

In the civil government people may be forced to obey the magistrate even to the loss of their property or lives, regardless of the good or evil which they may actually have done. Here even an unwilling obedience was satisfactory. To the contrary:

5) The officer may neither exact obedience, nor the people perform it further than the goodness, profit, and edification of and by the thing commanded doth enforce.³¹

III. QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

In the church of the establishment the emphasis was placed upon the ordination and calling of the ministry. These officers constituted the church, governed the church and exercised general authority. The

³¹Ibid., II, 143.

members were actually quite unnecessary to the function of the church. This polity was reversed by the separatist tradition in which the church existed with or without officers. The decisions were made by the members and the financial obligations were borne by them. Its success or failure depended solely upon the involvement of the membership.³²

With this responsibility resting upon the laymen it became imperative that each person's ideals be in harmony with the purpose of the church and that his influence should not detract from the character of the church. He must be willing to give to the church his devotion, his interest, and his support to whatever extent fell within the range of his capacity. The Puritan Church was a voluntary association and congregation of the "saints." The following is a partial description of

³²A primary deviation from the practice of the Anglicans was the Puritan belief that the church should be supported by the laity of the church rather than by an endowment from the past, a subsidy from a patron or the living of a benefice. In the margin of Dr. Robert Some's A Godly Treatise Containing and Deciding Certain Questions (London: G. B. Deputie to Christopher Barker, 1588), Henry Barrow wrote concerning ministerial support, "They ought to be maintained nether by mercenary wadges, nor jewish tithes, to support them in idlenes, or worldly pompe," (Barrow, op. cit., p. 157). In his Fourth Examination in March 1588/89 he stated concerning those who would not support freely, "Such are not the people of God," (p. 186). In "The First Part Of The Platform" he further suggested, "That the true ministerie ought not to be mainteyned by such gleabes, tithes, set stipends, or by the rated wages of the profane, but by the free contribution and dutiful benevolence of the faithful, especially of that congregation unto which they minister," (p. 227). Hooker, in contrast, had pointed out an alternate view, "What man is there of understanding, unto whom it is not manifest now the way of providing for the clergy by tithes, the device of almshouses for the poor, the sorting of the people into their several parishes, together with sundry other things which the Apostles' times could not have, (being now established,) are much more convenient for the Church of Christ, than if the same should be taken away for conformity's sake with the ancientest and first times," (Hooker, op. cit., Preface, Chapter iv. 4).

the kind of personality which they considered worthy of being a part of God's visible church:

And first seeing that the people of God are materially, as they speak, the church of God, it is required to the constitution of a holy church of God, that the people be holy, or saints, and sanctified in Jesus Christ; truly and internally in regard of God, and their own consciences; externally and in appearance in respect of others, whom it concerns to discern and judge of them, according to the Word of God and the rule of charity.³³

Robinson recognized the human difficulties in making spiritual judgments. He believed, however, that a person who engaged in certain outward acts disqualified himself for admittance into the true church of God. He failed to understand why this principle was not universal:

Now how marvelous a thing it is, and lamentable withal, that amongst Christians, any should be found so far at odds with Christian holiness, as to think that others than apparently holy at the least, deserved admittance into the fellowship of Christ's church, and therewith to Christ! Do, or can the gracious promises of God made to the church, the heavenly blessings due to the church, the seals of divine grace given to the church, appertain to others than such? Are others to be admitted into the family of God, the kingdom of Christ, and as it were the suburbs of heaven? The church of God is by him called and destinated to advance his glory in the holiness of their lives, and conversations, what then have those to do with it, or it with those, who as Calvin saith, live not with but God's dishonour?³⁴

In a powerful sentence he charged his adversaries with exercising too little concern for the high and holy things of God and criticized their absurd rejection of even minimal standards for church membership:

There are to be found, and these not a few, who would thrust upon the church of our thrice holy Lord, a very stage-like holiness: stoutly striving to make it good, that to constitute a true and lawful member of the visible church, no more is required, than that a man with his mouth confess Christ, although in his works he plainly declare himself of the synagogue of Satan.³⁵

³³Robinson, Works, III, 65.

³⁴Ibid., III, 66.

³⁵Ibid.

As Robinson looked upon the Church of England with its order of government--its ministry and ministrations, its compulsory gatherings, its uninterested membership, its provincial and diocesan government and service book, he saw the contrast with the churches of the separation. They were voluntary assemblies of persons sanctified at least to all outward appearances. They conceived prayers and services according to the direction of the Holy Spirit with the administration of the sacraments after the order of the gospel. The difference between the two required that, "Either the one or the other are plantings which God hath not planted, and shall be rooted up."³⁶ He pointed out that the Hebrew root Kalal and the Greek Ecclesia signify a company of people "called out." This call referred to both the voice of the caller and the obedience of the one called. When applied to religious usage, it signified a company of "called" people who came out of a state of nature into the state of grace--out of the world and into the kingdom of Christ. Since such a kingdom is neither natural nor civil, it must be constituted on a basis different from that of the city, state or parish. According to the scripture, the church is the body under the headship of Christ unto which it must be conformable in every part by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Richard Bernard had compared the church with a house.³⁷ He suggested that it is inevitable that there be some good and some poor materials in every house. Robinson countered his arguments by suggesting

³⁶Ibid., III, 126.

³⁷Bernard, Christian Advertisements, pp. 113-114.

that few people would be so foolish as to knowingly use inferior materials. In his view wicked and unrepentant sinners were rotting timbers and false materials for the house of God. He wrote, "The house of God, the church, is a spiritual house made of lively stones, built upon the lifegiving foundation, Jesus Christ."³⁸ Robinson denied Bernard's argument a second time by stating that in the churches of the separation, no wicked person or no person guilty of lewd conversation could be found. On the other hand, one might have a difficult time in finding any good material in many of the churches of the realm. He mockingly suggested that one would have to adopt the method of Diogenes and use a candle at noon if he were seriously intent on finding the saints in many of the established churches. He affirmed the right of the church to excommunicate such wicked persons, to remove those who did not conform to the principles of scripture. He derided the Church of England for failing to discipline those whose lives were out of harmony with the stated principles of the church and summed up the situation in a short sarcastic sentence, "A holy brotherhood it seems you will have, brother idolator, heretic, and what not!"³⁹ That such a congregation should be called a church was inconceivable to Pastor Robinson:

They that have no right to the holy things of God in the church are not to be admitted to it, neither is the church gathered of such persons, rightly and truly gathered.

³⁸Robinson, Works, II, 321.

³⁹Ibid., II, 323. John Greenwood in his "The True and the False Church" lists eleven arguments against the Church of England which further point out the Puritan objections due to the actual nature of the church. These eleven arguments may be found in the appendix. Greenwood, op. cit., pp. 97-102.

But men of lewd conversation have no right to the holy things of God in the church; and therefore the church gathered of such persons, is not truly gathered.

The former proposition is clear, because men admitted into the church, are admitted to the participation, and communion of the holy things of God in the church. The second also appeareth, both by the scripture before named, where Peter pronounceth, that such as have not their heart right with God, which no lewd person have or ever had, have no part in the holy things of God, as alas Mr. Bernard's own grant, namely, that wicked persons are to be cast out of the church. And what could there be in the world more ridiculous, yea or wherein God were more plainly mocked, than to gather a church of such persons, as are judged fit to be cast out of the church.⁴⁰

Bernard had argued that a woman was a man's wife even though unfaithful until she received the bill of divorce; that a man was the subject of the king even if he were traitorous, and that a man might be a tradesman even though he was not particularly good at it. Robinson countered:

What is false, but that which hath an appearance of truth, but not the truth itself, whereof it makes show? . . . there is none more truly false . . . than that man is . . . which profeseth in words he looks to be saved by Jesus Christ, and yet continues in a lewd and wicked conversation, having a show of godliness, but denying the power thereof, and, professing the knowledge of God, but by works denying him. Whereupon I do also conclude, that the body of the Church of England being gathered generally, and for the most part of such members visibly, cannot be the true visible body of Christ, except a true living body can be compacted of false and dead members.⁴¹

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS

AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO OFFICERS

A matter of continuing controversy between the establishment and the Puritans was the source and the basis of authority in the church.

⁴⁰Robinson, Works, II, 324.

⁴¹Ibid., II, 327.

Bernard cited a number of New Testament texts to show that, "the flock are to obey the shepherd," "the children are subject to the Father," "that the work is to be ordered by the workman." He also affirmed that no Old Testament evidence could be cited to show that the people ever had power over their pastors.⁴²

Robinson countered with a quotation:

These things are popular, and may deceive the simple and credulous, but though the fool believe everything, yet the prudent will consider his steps. Proverbs 14:15.⁴³

He also agreed that the flock should certainly give heed to the shepherd, but this belief assumed that the shepherd was worth heeding:

But what now if the officers will reign besides the Lord? if their works be such, as deserve hatred, and not love? if instead of watching for the people's souls, they take a course, either to starve them through negligence, or to poison them with heresy, or evil life? must they still obey them: or hath the church no remedy against them? The churches of Galatia were bound to receive and submit unto such ministers as brought the doctrine of Christ; and yet if any man, Gal. 1:9, yea, though he were an apostle, or above an apostle, should bring any other doctrine they were to hold him accursed, and so to cast him away as an accursed thing.⁴⁴

⁴²Bernard, Christian Advertisements, p. 100. See also Bernard, Plaine Evidences, p. 180.

⁴³Robinson, Works, II, 224.

⁴⁴Ibid. King James I recognized that the clergy did not always manifest the spiritual qualities which should have been the notable characteristics of their office. In a speech shortly after his accession, he stated: "And here I have occasion to speak to you my Lords the Bishops. For as you, my lord of Durham, said very learnedly today in your sermon, Correction without instruction is tyrannie: so ought you, and all the Clegie under you, to be more careful, vigilant, and diligent then you have bene, to winne Soules to God, as well by your exemplary life, as doctrine." King James I, "The King Majesties Speech, as It was Delivered by Him in the Upper House of Parliament to the Lord's Spiritual and Temporall, and to the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses There Assembled." Delivered Monday, March 19, 1603 [1603/4] (London: Robert Baker, 1604).

Robinson added to the textual support a simply stated, but apt illustration:

The pilot is to guide the ship, and all that are in it, yea, though the king himself be there, but if he either ignorantly or desperately will run upon the sands, he may be displaced by his passengers, and the fittest put in his room.⁴⁵

He then listed a number of additional reasons to show the vanity of an opinion which held that the officers should be beyond the authority of the church.

1) Bernard had claimed that to separate was merely to excommunicate in reverse. Rather than the church removing from itself an undesirable element, the undesirable element had removed itself from the church. He contended that no such right existed. Robinson claimed: "Oh the hellish bondage wherein these men would enthrall the Lord's people to their destruction."⁴⁶

2) Robinson reminded his reader of Christ's statement that those who assumed responsible positions of leadership in the church actually became the servants of the church. "He who would be first among you must be your servant." Therefore he argued:

⁴⁵Robinson, Works, II, 224.

⁴⁶Ibid., II, 225. The manner of selection and disposal of unsatisfactory clergy was of high concern to the Puritans. In 1583 Robert Harrison had bewailed their plight; "and so the guydes of our soules, are appointed unto us without our aduice and counsell, whose life and death of soule it standeth vpon to trie our guydes, that after they haue bene founde able to cutt and deuide our portion of ye bread of life in dewe season, they might be approued of vs, & receyued. But that which is more greeuous, when a blinde leader is come to take vs by the hande, we haue no authoritie as the Church of God, to refuse him, or to complyne for redresse, or to remoue him, after we have tried his inabilitie." Robert Harrison, The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 86.

For as it were a strange thing, that men should have no command over their servants, as I have oftimes showed the church officers to be the church servants, so were it as strange, if the putting of the servants out of their office, should not argue power over them.⁴⁷

3) If the pastor be one of the brethren of the church, then the church cannot suffer sin to rest upon him, but must admonish him and if he remain obstinate, cast him out.

4) The church has no responsibility to judge those who are not members of the church, but those who are members must fall under its judgment. Thus even the ministers must fall under the judgment of the church.

5) If the minister cannot be disciplined, then he lacks a means of salvation made available to the membership. In the Puritan view there were two means of salvation: One was the preaching of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe; the other was excommunication which was the power of the Lord Jesus Christ for the destruction of the flesh, or humbling of the offender that his soul might be saved. In a humble paragraph Robinson professed his need for this means to be operative in his own behalf. (However, as one reads it, suspicion arises that his concern is not really for himself):

And for mine own part, knowing mine own infirmities, and that I am subject to sin, yea, and to frowardness in sin, as much as the brethren are: if by my office I should be deprived of the remedy which they enjoy, that blessed ordinance of the churches censures, I should think my office accursed, and myself by it, as frustrating, and disappointing me of that main end, for which the servants of Christ ought to join themselves unto the church of Christ, furnished with his power for their reformation. And since the chief thing, which after the glory of God, the saints are to regard, is that

⁴⁷Robinson, Works, II, 225.

their salvation is in no way endangered, but by obstinate impenitency, and that obstinacy hath none other solemn ordinance for remedy, but excommunication, what cause of sorrow had I for the want of this sovereign remedy, and means of salvation by mine office, which without it I might enjoy? As on the contrary, God is my record, how in the very writing of these things, my soul is filled with spiritual joy, that I am under this easy yoke of Christ, the censures of the church, whereof I am; and how much I am comforted in this very consideration, against my vile and corrupt nature, which notwithstanding, I am persuaded the Lord will never so far suffer to rebel, as that it shall not be tamed, and subdued by this strong hand of God, without which it might every day and hour hazard my salvation.⁴⁸

Robinson took the argument a step further. He reminded his reader that the pastor or officer by virtue of his office enjoyed superior opportunities and privileges. He was usually able to read and often had the benefit of further education. Thus he was subject not only to the same discipline exercised over all members, but a higher discipline to be enforced with greater severity because of his exalted position:

Where methinks, it were more meet, as that he which can read, and so hath or may have greater knowledge should be the more severely punished civilly so, that the officers in the church should undergo, if it were to be found, a heavier censure for their sin, as being both more scandalous and less excusable: and so the Lord by Moses expressly manifests his will to be, in enjoining the priest a greater sacrifice, a bullock for his sin, where a goat, which was less, might serve in the like case for the sin of one of the people. Lev. 4:3,27,28.⁴⁹

For Robinson, the power of the church was always in the hands of the congregation:

The power is one thing which is inseparable from the body, the use of the power another thing, which in many cases it may want. Civil corporations have the king's power and charter, as well

⁴⁸Ibid., II, 227.

⁴⁹Ibid., II, 229.

without, as with officers, and yet it may be there are liberties in their charter they cannot enjoy without officers: they have therefore power for officers also, which they may choose, and so enjoy all their liberties by their help: so in the spiritual cooperation, the church, there is always the whole power of Christ residing, which therefore may call officers for the use of it; to which it is sufficient, that it can without officers use this power for things simply and confession of sins; for the edifying of them by exhortations and comforts in the ordinance of prophesying, and so for casting them out by excommunication, which fall from their former profession, or confession.⁵⁰

V. THE ROLE OF OFFICERS IN THE CHURCH

A charge which was repeatedly hurled at the separatist churches was that they chose their officers loosely and were, therefore, without the proper authority in their church leadership. The fact that a cobbler or husbandman might assume a position of leadership in the church provided an issue to attack. The reality of the Anglican situation was not significantly better. The leading clergymen and bishops could claim a liberal education, but many of the parish priests were illiterate and dependent upon their memory in conducting the worship service.

The lay leadership of the Puritan church was often drawn from men of humble occupation who lacked formal education, but they were not men of limited abilities. Regarding Puritan standards for the selection of church officers, Robinson stated:

We make no dumb ministers: neither dare we admit of any man either for a teaching or governing elder, of whose ability in prayer, in prophesying, and debating of church matters we have not had good experience, before he be so much as nominated to the

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 235.

office of an elder amongst us: remembering always the deep charge of the apostle "to lay hands suddenly on no man, nor be partakers of other men's sins."⁵¹

He pointed out that the separatist congregations held the same requirements for the selection of church officers as the New Testament had outlined:

It was required of them that they should be apt to teach, able to convince, as also able to manage the public affairs of the churches, which were to depend on them, whether in cases of controversy or otherwise, and such they both then were, and now are good by trial and experience known to be.⁵²

He also added that in New Testament times the local churches were without the jurisdiction and counsel of the apostles for long periods of time and that in their absence the responsibility of choosing

⁵¹Ibid., II, 132. In 1575, Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in cooperation with a number of other bishops agreed upon a list of qualifications for the ministry of the Church of England. These requirements covered his integrity, his learning, his age. The purpose of the list seems to be to prevent charlatans from obtaining positions by fraud and to place emphasis on the educational qualifications of the candidate by limiting the income and position of those with minimal education. Articles, whereupon it was agreed by the Archbishop of Canterbury a. other the bishops (R. Jugge, 1575). The complete list of qualifications may be seen in the appendix.

⁵²Robinson, Works, II, 146. In 1589 Henry Barrow had offered a description of the ministers duties in his "A True Description out of the Worde of God of the Visible Church," "The pastour's office is, to feede the sheepe of Christ in greene and wholesome pastures of his worde, and leade them to the still waters, even to the pure fountaine and river of life; hee must guyde and keepe those sheepe by that heavenlie sheepehooke and pastorall staffe of the worde, thereby drawing them to him, thereby lookinge into their soules, even into their most secrete thoughtes: thereby discerning their diseases, and thereby curinge them: applying to everie disease a fit and convenient medicine, according to the qualitie and malladie of the disease, and give warning to the church, that they may orderlie proceede to excommunication. Further, he must by this his sheepehooke watch over and defend his flock from ravenous beastes and the wolfe, and take the litle foxes, etc." Barrow, op. cit., p. 218.

officers fell upon the local church. They replaced those who had died, created officers as the needs arose and disciplined errant members to maintain the purity of the congregation.

Even when the disciples were present at the election of officers, they relied on the judgment of the members who were acquainted with the members in question. The members selected their officers and the apostles blessed their choice.

Robinson reviewed the experience of Paul and Titus in Crete. A church was raised up, but no officers were immediately appointed. Paul went elsewhere to work while Titus remained to train men in prophesying and prayer. When capable men had demonstrated their abilities, they were appointed to positions of leadership.

An incident at the church of Corinth in which a member was guilty of committing incest aroused repeated mention in separatist writings. The sin was widely known and brought derision upon the church. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for not removing the unconverted person from their fellowship. He thus indicated that the power of discipline was in the hands of the local church and not the prerogative of some distant ruling body.⁵³

The experience of the church at Jerusalem at the time of its dissolution is also indicative of the manner in which Christian churches were to operate. The dispersed went to every place preaching the

⁵³ Echoes of this viewpoint may be found in a number of puritan writings; one is that of Francis Johnson: "The power of excommunication is to be in the body of the church, whereof the parties to be cast out, are members." Francis Johnson, A Short Treatise Concerning the Exposition of Those Words of Christ, "Tell The Church" (Amsterdam: 1611), p. 1.

Word, and raising up churches. Churches were begun and the gospel was preached with neither apostles or prophets. Robinson contended that a similar occurrence might still be possible.

And what if the Lord should now raise up a company of faithful men in Barbary, or America, by the reading of the scriptures, or by the writings, conferences, or sufferings of some godly men, must they not separate themselves from the filthiness of the heathen to the Lord? nor turn from idols to the true God? nor join themselves unto him in the fellowship of the gospel? nor have any communion together for their mutual edification and comfort, till some vagrant priest from Rome or England be sent unto them to begin their church matters with the service book?⁵⁴

Robinson believed that there were only two ways in which a true church could be constituted. The first was that a new Christ should appear who would call new apostles who would raise up churches, or secondly, believers should be gathered together by the Word and appoint officers from among themselves for "God calls no man ordinarily but by the church."⁵⁵

The controversy between the Separatists and Anglicans over the matter of the selection of church officers grew out of a different concept of the work of the officer of the church. From the Anglican viewpoint, which adhered closely to the Roman Catholic position, the authority of the magistrate and prelate was roughly similar. Their position itself gave them a certain degree of authority, the higher the position, the greater the authority.

And the reason is because civil magistrates have authority annexed to their office, and order; and though both they and their commandments be most unjust, yet do they still retain their authority,

⁵⁴Robinson, Works, II, 147.

⁵⁵Ibid., II, 148.

which their subjects may not shake off: but ministers and church governors have no such authority tied to their office, but merely to the word of God.⁵⁶

Therefore the relationship of the people to their religious leaders was not a matter of making them lords and sovereigns. It was rather in listening to their godly counsels, in following their wise directions, in receiving their holy exhortations, and in using their faithful service and ministry. The authority of the church lay in areas which could be best served by exhortation, instruction, comforting and improvement by listening to the word of God.

The elders were set over the church like the physician over his patient to minister to him with his skill and faithfulness; as the lawyer attends to his cause; as a steward over his family; as a watchman over the whole city for the safe-keeping thereof. This was to be the elders' and bishops' government. Also seen here was the contrast between the new and the old concept of ministry. In the former, the position was for the benefit of the cleric; in the latter, it is for the benefit of those whom he served.

A policy framed with the best interests of the people in mind would doubtless operate differently from one in which the prelate was favored. According to Robinson's formulation, the authority of the Word would be over the people, and the authority of the people led by the Word, would be over the officers of the church. Such an arrangement would provide for the spiritual growth of the congregation, their edification and development, and at the same time protect them from the

⁵⁶Ibid., II, 144.

unscrupulous prelate who might seek to exploit the office to his own profit. He spelled this out in the following paragraph:

It is the steward's duty to make provision for the family, but what if he neglects his duty in the master's absence? Must the whole family starve, yea and the wife also? or is not some other of the family best able, to be employed for the present necessity? It is the pilot's office to guide the ship, but what if he ignorantly, or negligently, or desperately will run the same upon the rocks, or sands, must the rest of the mariners forbear to intermeddle, and so perish? It is the captain's office to lead the army, but what if he or they will perfidiously betray the same into the hands of the enemy, may not the body of the army make the best head they can to defend themselves, and offend their enemies, using the best means they have for their present direction?

So may the church as the wife of Christ, if the steward, the minister, neglect the provision, use the help and service of another the fittest in the family to provide food; the multitude, as the mariners, if the minister, the pilot be desperate, set another the most skillful at the stern: the body of the army of the church, if the officers, as the captains, be perfidious, use the help and guidance of some other the most expert: so may, as a private citizen, a magistrate, a private member become a minister, for an action of necessity to be performed, by the consent of the rest.⁵⁷

Robinson pointed out that even in the Anglican system, the sexton, in the absence of the priest, read the service. Therefore, if the minister fails to meet the needs of the people he may be deposed by the congregation and the man best fitted to the office appointed in his place. Needless to say, the Separatists carried the conclusion a step further. The Anglican church had failed to meet the spiritual needs of the people and the Separatists believed they had a perfect right to

⁵⁷Ibid., II, 151. A paragraph from John Greenwood indicates the reasons which made the possibility of the replacement of the existing priesthood necessary: ". . . I perceaved the first principle of religion (which is to invoke the name of the true God, through the meditation of Christ in spirit and truth, with heart and voyce, for our present wantes according to the wil of God) was never yet sincearly taught by these time-serving priests." Greenwood, op. cit., p. 23.

establish an alternate church to take the place of the errant stewards of God's word.

Robinson sought to stand on the firm foundation of scripture in all matters. His position on the right of the church members to select their own officers was no exception:

For the choice of officers, we do take for our directions the practices of the apostles, and apostolical church, Acts 1, 6, and 14, grounded upon a perpetual equity, that men should choose them under Christ, unto whose faithfulness, under the same Christ, and by his appointment, they are to commit themselves, and their souls: and them, as Christ's and their servants to maintain: in any one of which examples, the conscience of a Godly man is better established, than in all the canons of popes, or prelates, or other devices of politic men whatsoever, departing from the apostolical simplicity. I will instance in one example where this point is most largely and clearly set down; unto which the rest must be referred, and by it other places, handling the same matter more briefly, explained and opened. We do read, Acts 6, how the apostles call together the multitude; show them the necessity of choosing deacons, what their work is, and how they must be qualified, and how many they would have chosen: whom, being chosen accordingly, by the multitude, they ordain; sanctifying the whole action with prayer. Where it is evident, that though the calling did chiefly depend upon the multitude, yet did the government of the whole action lie upon the officers. Conformable thereunto is our practice, so near as we can, upon the like occasion.⁵⁸

Richard Bernard countered the argument by stating that the local churches did not select officers until the apostles had instructed them to do so.⁵⁹ Robinson replied that the apostles no longer came with their corporeal presence, but they came just as truly in their writings. The wisdom and guidance of the Apostles is now even more readily available to the church. He pointed to the fact that there were at present

⁵⁸Robinson, Works, III, 135.

⁵⁹Bernard, Christian Advertisements, p. 145; also: Bernard, Plaine Evidences, p. 296.

no apostles with general jurisdiction over the churches of Christ, nor were ministers endowed with the power to speak in tongues, to heal or to preach to all nations. Under the leadership of the apostles, officers were established in every place for the ministration of the church in that place. No New Testament authority could be found to show that any officer was to have authority outside the congregation which elected him.

Robinson suggested that the people's eyes would fail in their heads before they could expect to see a priest from the Church of England attempting to aid the members in forming a congregation after the New Testament pattern. He believed that each congregation had the perfect right to appoint its own officers. The power to appoint officers naturally included the authority to ordain them to office:

Whereupon then do I conclude, that if the church without officers may elect, it may also ordain officers: if it have the power and commission of Christ for the one, and that the greater, it hath it also for the other, which is the less. If it have officers, it must use them as hands to put the person by ordination into that office, to which they have right by election: but if it want officers, it may, and must use other the fittest instruments it hath: as in the natural body, if men want hands, or be deprived of the use of them, they do for their present necessity use their teeth, or feet, or other fittest part of their body, for the business possible to be done by them.⁶⁰

Here we see Robinson attempting to deal with two contested issues. The first was the right of a group of people to separate from what they believed to be a distortion of the Christian faith, and secondly when once separated, how to begin a line of authority within the new church. The validity of Puritan ordination was under continual

⁶⁰Robinson, Works, II, 445.

attack. Was their former ordination in the Church of England valid after they separated from it? Could a congregation ordain its own officers? Could those officers ordain future candidates?

Robinson looked upon ordination as a visible demonstration of the church's recognition that the candidate possessed the qualities which would enable him to carry out the work of the ministry and their willingness to accept his leadership. They were quick to admit the ordination itself did not make a minister, and that occasionally a person might be ordained who failed to possess the inward qualifications for a true ministry.

Two things combined to make a person fit for the ministry. First there were the God-given talents required for the position; and secondly, God's call to that position. The call is extended by the voice and vote of the church which had seen the talents in the life of the person in question. Robinson pointed out that the absence of the "call" did not indicate that a person did not have the talents prerequisite for the ministry. In each congregation there would be those who might serve as well as the appointed leadership. These people should therefore be given other positions in the church in order that their talents might be used.

The place of the minister was to serve. His authority was based on the scriptures and given him by the congregation which set him in office. That authority extended only to the church which elected and ordained him. To think otherwise would make every pastor a universal pope. For a minister to attempt to extend his authority was a matter of blatant usurpation.

Such sentiments were the verbal recognitions of the progressing transition from the world of unquestioned authority to that of free societies and democratic institutions. Power was not to be tied to position. It lay in the hands of the people who recognized in their leaders qualities which made submission beneficial. That submission was not a matter of self-defacement but a voluntary acceptance of his leadership as instrumental to the good of all. Robinson recognized this transition but he did not assume that it was a new trend in theology. He felt it was the correct and eternal attitude.

The scriptures do expressly affirm that the churches were gathered by persuasion and voluntary submission unto the gospel. Acts 28:24; II Cor. 9:13. And it is a strange thing, even above wonder, that any man /Richard Bernard/ should have preached so many years, and written so many books about religions, and yet not know, that the nature of religions is not to be constrained, but persuaded.⁶¹

VI. THE AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTRY

The Separatists attempted to establish a church after the pattern of the New Testament. The question of authority was of immediate concern. By what right did a church exist? What is the authority of the minister? How is that authority established? Robinson treats this topic in his Justification of Separation. He attempted to demonstrate the nature of the true church and its relationship, not only to God, but also to the world. He introduced the subject with three questions:

- 1) Whether the ministry be before the church, or no.
- 2) Whether the delegated power of Christ for the use of the

⁶¹Ibid., II, 185.

Holy things of God be given primarily, and immediately to the church or the ministers.

3) Whether the Lord has so linked the ministry in the chain of succession, that no minister can be truly called, and ordained, or appointed without a precedent minister.⁶²

It was the contention of Richard Bernard that the officers make the church and that the ministry precedes the congregation in importance and authority.⁶³ In his view, it was the responsibility of the minister to form the church, govern it and pass his authority to the hands of the following minister. Such conceptions are understandable particularly in view of the prevailing customs within the establishment. When the church is sponsored by a patron or the state, the initiative for its support does not arise from the laymen. The only obligation upon the members was to attend and conform to the Book of Common Prayer and the Act of Supremacy. The member was wholly on the receiving end of the church's program. He came to church--a place constructed in which to hold services. Membership was automatic and geographical. A person need not petition for membership, for to live within the parish was all that was required. Robinson proposed that the "True Church" ought to be constituted on a different basis.

He acknowledged that there were two kinds of ministries. One was ordinary and the other extraordinary. The extraordinary minister was the one obviously ordained by God by some miraculous and observable demonstration such as Adam or the apostles. The ordinary minister was

⁶²Ibid., II, 418.

⁶³Bernard, Christian Advertisements, p. 99; see also Bernard, Plaine Evidences, p. 187.

one called by men and ordained by men without the benefit of any supernatural manifestation. Robinson added a third category:

. . . the word minister extends itself not only unto officers ordinary and extraordinary, but even to any outward means, whether person or thing, by which the revealed word of God is manifested and made known unto men for their instruction and conversion.⁶⁴

He agreed with Bernard that God was the first preacher, and that "the Word is before the church as the seed that begetteth it."⁶⁵ Whatever agent took the Gospel to a people: a book, a Bible, or a minister became their minister by virtue of the fact that it had taken the truth to them. Bernard believed this supported his claim that the minister preceded the congregation, but Robinson denied that the hypothetical situation had anything to do with religion in England.⁶⁶

Adam was the first human minister although he was not instituted until the creation of Eve. There was no subject to become the object of his ministrations prior to her existence; trees and beasts were a poor parish. The two, Adam and Eve, coming together constituted the first church, and formed a company. Paul and the apostles preached the gospel in remote places, raising up churches which then appointed officers to serve their needs. But it was not until the churches had been gathered together that the need for officers was recognized.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Robinson, Works, II, 419.

⁶⁵Ibid. See Bernard, Christian Advertisements, p. 144.

⁶⁶Robinson, Works, II, 420.

⁶⁷Ibid., II, 420-421.

Robinson noted from John 10:3 that a shepherd was a person who knew his sheep by name. It was inconceivable that a person sent to raise up a church should be called a pastor until he had entered this intimate relationship with his people. It was obvious to him that it was the people who made the church. An unmarried man cannot be a husband; a man without a child cannot be a father. Robinson's definition of the proper church officer was simple but its fulfillment was by no means easy. A man was not a minister, "till he have by his ministry called and separated them unto the Lord, and be by their election, called, and separated to his office."⁶⁸

Robinson outlined his fundamental concept of the relation between the minister and the church in an easy three-step formula:

- 1) That the church is before the ministry, because men are a church as they are Christians, and Christians, before they be ministers.
- 2) Ministers make not the church, but become such by an office bestowed upon them in their state of Christianity, that is in their church state.
- 3) That the Christian brethren though not in office are part of the church, since even the officers themselves are acknowledged the church, or of the church as they are Christians.⁶⁹

The first step towards admission into the church envisioned by Robinson was that of choice.⁷⁰ It was not a matter of birthplace,

⁶⁸Ibid., II, 422.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰With his characteristic spirit of "sweet reasonableness" Richard Hooker had earlier argued against the usage of the prerogative of personal choice. In his opinion choice led to contention and contention to strife. He doubted that God could give any success to disputation and urged that all submit to the authority of the established

church in order that unity might prevail. The commentary may be found in Hooker, op. cit., Preface, Chap. vi. 1.

Unfortunately, "sweet reasonableness" was not the means employed by the Church of England to persuade Separatists to adhere to its policies. Rather, Ecclesiastical Courts with the power of coercion were used to deal with dissenters. In 1584 Whitgift secured from the Court the right to use the oath ex officio, an oath which the judge could require the accused person to take, and, having taken it he was then required on oath to give evidence against himself. Whitgift next set forth Twenty-four Articles, couched in such terms that no honest Puritan could escape deprivation. Stephen Neill, Anglicanism (Baltimore: Penguin, 1965), p. 118. Henry Ainsworth had challenged such a system, "And where you learned to enforce faith, and to constreyn men to be members of your church I can not tell; unless you follow Mohomet's doctrine who taught that men should be compelled to faith, by warr and sword." Ainsworth, Counterpoyson, p. 72.

Cf. Wilfred Hooper, "The Court of Faculties," The English Historical Review, XXV (1910), 670-686. Mr. Hooper gives a comprehensive history of the Court of Faculties, its functions and relation to the Church and Crown until its dissolution in 1857.

Edward P. Cheyney, "The Court of the Star Chamber," The American Historical Review, XVII (1913), 727-750. Mr. Cheyney presents a concise history of this court. He illustrates its harsh and frequently barbarous punishments and points out its reputation for secrecy and severity.

Roland G. Usher, The Rise and Fall of the High Commission (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913). Usher offers a comprehensive history of the Court of the High Commission. Chapter V deals with the procedure of the Court's operation and Chapter VI discusses the development of organized opposition to the Court on the part of the Puritans in particular.

John Southerden Burn offers a more stinging appraisal of the actions of the Court of High Commission. He states: "The Threat of the Star Chamber has terrified many a stout-hearted Englishman, and not without reason; yet the High Commission, although a Court of more modern institution, drew many more cases within its clutches and was less merciful in its proceedings, for the whole course of the High Commission from its first arrest or summons, to the ultimate ruin, or death of its unfortunate victim, was a series of unconstitutional and illegal cruelties,--refusing a copy of the charges, insisting on the oath ex-officio, suspending, depriving, degrading, and ruining the poor wretch,--occasionally sending to prison even the lawyer who dared to defend the accused, or to question the power or legality of the Court," John Southerden Burn, The High Commission (London: J. Russell Smith, 1865),

parentage or heritage. A person must choose rather to "come apart and be separate," to remove himself from the world and join others of similar attitude. This shift in emphasis in religious devotions was indicative of a transition in the patterns of human behavior. Men were no longer to be born to perpetuate the station in life which their parents had occupied, to follow them in faith and practice, to inherit their property, to carry their name, to plow the same field both literally and figuratively with little thought that the world might hold alternate possibilities.

Membership in a separatist church signaled that a person had chosen to reverse this order of affairs. Rather than his past determining his behavior, it became his personal task to comprehend the scriptures and to ascertain the will of God for his life. It is this shift that marks the transition from medieval to modern religion. Religion that is guided by thought and reason was destined to supersede faith based on superstition. If royalty like Mary Queen of Scots could be disposed of, then why not a faith that seemed to shackle initiative and stifle the magic element of personal involvement? This transition was characterized by a shift in the basis of authority, a move from an arbitrary authority to the elusive realm of private interpretation.

With the invention of printing and the increasing availability of the scriptures, the mind became the avenue to the spirit and the

pp. v-vi. The appendix records one of the examinations as a specimen of the indignities offered in the High Commission. Of equal significance is Burn's, The Star Chamber (London: J. Russel Smith, 1870). Both of these volumes list the notices of the courts and a succinct record of their actions.

scriptural injunction, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," rang with new clarity.

Nothing prompts man to display his individuality like a variety of possibilities. The advent of the dissenting congregations presented just this choice to those seriously intent on following the dictates of conscience, anxious to serve God and desiring to be involved in the momentous events transpiring within the realm of England.

The separatist churches attracted such persons by offering unprecedented opportunity for the honest in heart and active in mind. The choice to join was only the beginning. There were other choices to be made, not by a remote bishop or indolent priest, but by the active membership. Who would lead in the study of the scriptures? Who should be the next minister? Should a property be purchased? The new religious faith nurtured a new kind of person. No longer was the minister someone to be avoided; rather, he was the man selected by the membership. No longer was the church a structure that sheltered one's forced attendance. No longer was the sermon the dulllest hour of the week. Personal involvement in every phase of religious activity was followed by commitment and dedication.

The minister was a man now known to the congregation as honest, upright and diligent. He was a man who would feed his sheep rather than fleece them⁷¹ and who knew them by name because he was one of them.

⁷¹Thomas Cartwright, a teacher at Christ College, Cambridge, expressed the Puritan ideal of pastoral concern, "And further I will not excuse all those that either resign or suffer themselves to be deprived to avoid further trouble, without consideration of their flock." Thomas Cartwright, A Second Admonition to the Parliament (Wandsworth: J. S., 1572), p. 20.

Their hands had been placed upon his head as a sign that this was the man God had led them to choose as their pastor. Robinson firmly believed: "The gift of prophecy comes not by the office, but being found in persons before, makes them capable of the office by due means."⁷²

Here was the pattern for the government and development of the church as outlined by Christ and the apostles, but a look at the established church revealed that the plan had fallen into disuse. Robinson gives a rather lengthy explanation for the transition from the government of force, power and authority to the government of personal initiative:

In the beginning, the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles by his spirit, appointed none other true visible churches, but particular congregations of faithful people . . . but as knowledge puffeth up, I Cor. 8:3, so within a few ages, the officers and governors of the church, being men of knowledge, began to swell with that poisoned humor of pride and ambition, wherewith Antichrist had infected them, especially when they were once settled in peace and plenty; and taking withal, partly advantage, by the people's negligence in themselves, and superstitious admiration of their guides; and partly by the abuse of their liberty, have been bold to engross the liberties of the whole church into their own hands, and with them, the name. They alone must have the keys of the kingdom hanging at their girdle, for the opening and shutting of heaven's gates: which is all one as if in plain terms they should affirm, that to them alone were committed the oracles of God, the Gospel of Salvation. See Rom. 3:2; and Jude 3. They alone must speak in the church to edifying, exhortation, and comfort, I Cor. 14:3; and so all the brethren must be silenced in the exercise of prophesying. To them alone must the complaints of sins be brought, and they alone must be heard in the reforming of them: and thus must the bottomless gulf of the governor's authority swallow up the brethren's liberty in the reproofing and censuring of offenders. They alone are to separate and choose the ministers; and of this branch of the power of Christ amongst the rest, must the body of the church be stripped. And as there is no end of errors, where they once begin, especially those which tend to the advancement of the man of sin in his ministers above all that is called God, so hath this iniquity prevailed

⁷²Robinson, Works, III, 293.

yet further, even to the bereaving of the people of the cup of the Lord's supper, and of the very scriptures in the mother's tongue: the priests alone communicating in both parts of the supper; and inclosing the scriptures themselves within the Romish or Latin language, which they alone, to speak of, understood.

Yea, to conclude, so effectual hath the delusion of Satan been this way, that it hath been universally taught, and believed, that an implicit faith was sufficient in the lay people, and that no more was required of them than to believe, as the church (that is, the guides and governors of the church) believed, though they were utterly ignorant of what the faith was. And what less in effect doth Mr. B. Bernard affirm in his second book, Plaine Evidences, page 145, where he writes that if the chief do voluntarily receive, profess and proclaim a faith, or religion, it is to be accounted the act of all, though the inferiors come not to consent? He might as well have added, though they be ignorant of it, or what it means. Yea, doth not this conclusion follow upon the former ground, that the officers are the church, Matthew 18, for the reprovng and censuring of offenders, and for the binding and loosing of sins? If the officers be the church for one religious, or spiritual determination, why not for another? And if the censures agreed upon and ministered by the officers, be by way of representation, the censures of the church, without the actual consent of the people; why is not the faith agreed upon and published by the officers the faith of the church, by way of representation, before the people's distinct knowledge of it, or actual consent unto it? Put the case; the officers change their ancient faith in some main point, wherein the body of the church still abideth, and so differeth from them; and that they take occasion to excommunicate some brother, or brethren, that most opposes them: if this excommunication of the officers be the excommunication of the church representatively, without the people's consent, then is this new faith also of the officers, for which this excommunication is practised, the faith of the people, notwithstanding their not only not consenting unto, but their utter dissenting from the same.

Now as the governors did thus engross the power and liberties of the church, so no marvel, though with them, they assumed the name. Hence it is that they alone are called the church, the clergy, the spirituality, page 197: the profane idiotish laity are excluded both from the title, and thing. Simon the saddler, Tomkin the tailor, Billy the bellows-maker must be no churchman, nor meddle with church matters. As though it were either not true, or to no purpose, which is written, that Christ himself was carpenter, Paul a tent-maker, Peter, Andrew, James and John fishermen. Mark 6:3; Acts 17:3; Matthew 4:18, 21.

One only thing more I will add, and so conclude this point; which is, that the priests were not more eager at the first upon the people, till they had swallowed up their liberty, than they were

afterwards one upon another, till one had gotten all; from whom, as from the catholic visible head, all power should issue, and be deriyed to the several parts of the body. And how clean a way, Mr. B. /Bernard/ and others, which knowing better have the more sin, make to this mischief in pleading that Paul alone, I Cor. 5, and the several angels alone in the several churches, Rev. 2, 3, were to reform and censure abuses, let the wise reader judge.⁷³

Robinson believed that it was the responsibility of the congregation to select its leaders and determine the general course of the church's action. He illustrated this principle by referring to Acts, Chapter 6:2,3,5,6, to describe a situation in which the church had grown too large to be adequately served by the apostles. The Grecian believers were complaining that their widows were not receiving sufficient attention. It was agreed by the leadership of the congregation that it was not proper for the disciples to "leave the Word of God and serve tables." Therefore the congregation was called together and instructed to choose seven men of honest report to carry out the business of the church. The congregation approved the plan, chose seven and ordained them.

Robinson assumed that Paul included the message that they should choose their own officers when he professed to have given the Ephesians all he had received from God. In I Cor. 14:37,38,40, Paul reminded the congregation that their future prophets must acknowledge the truth of the things he had given them. Robinson regarded these instructions as matters of principle which should be practiced and therefore found himself at odds with the establishment which held them only as precepts.

⁷³Ibid., II, 388, 389, 390.

An interesting illustration of Robinson's uncanny ability to introduce simple but effective comparisons to demonstrate the absurdity of his opponents' position may be found in his discussion of the common practice by which the patrons chose the incumbent for the living of their jurisdiction:

If some one man in the parish had entailed to him and his heirs forever the power of appointing husbands to all the women in the parish, the bondage was /sic/ intolerable, though in a matter of civil nature; how much more intolerable then is the spiritual bondage of the parish assemblies under the imperious presentations of these Lord Patrons, whose clerks they must receive, and submit unto, whether they will or no.⁷⁴

The lucrative aspects of the parish must not be overlooked. It was not uncommon for a cleric to exchange the amount of the first year's income for an appointment. He might then appoint a second to serve in his place and pay him a portion of the living. He could have several churches under his care and serve them all through curates and reap the profits while actually serving none.

Christopher Hill describes the problem in the book, The Century of the Revolution:

The parson was a key figure in the struggles of the time. It is therefore important to know who appointed him. The answer is revealing of the nature of seventeenth-century society. Apart from a mere handful of parishes where the congregation, a town corporation, or a London Company had the patronage, presentation was invariably in the hands of the landed ruling class. More often than not this was a layman--the King, a local squire, or a great man like the Earl of Warwick. But the higher clergy--Bishops, Deans and Chapters, Oxford and Cambridge colleges also enjoyed much patronage. The Bishop of Lincoln's 150 livings were mostly very poor ones, but they made him a power in the land.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Ibid., II, 396.

⁷⁵Christopher Hill, The Century of the Revolution (Edinburgh:

The patron naturally chose the parson with an eye to his own interests.⁷⁶ The enforced usage of the Book of Common Prayer simplified that choice. Anyone who could read was qualified to lead the service.⁷⁷ Thus indolent, uneducated, immoral and selfish priests were recruited to shepherd the unruly flock. They were shepherds who could be depended upon not to question the morality of their patrons, not to raise disturbing questions about theological issues, not to disturb the luxury of the bishops nor the conscience of the monarch.⁷⁸

Robinson indicted not only the patrons and bishops who indulged in tyranny over the congregation, but also the congregation itself

Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), pp. 77. Cf. Christopher Hill, Economic Problems of the Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956). Mr. Hill presents an extensive discussion on the problems related to the finance of the church and the frequent misuse of the church funds.

⁷⁶See Laurence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 728.

⁷⁷The substance of this concern was a long-standing objection of the Puritans. In 1572, Thomas Cartwright stated, ". . . a boy of ten years old may do the minister's office for the substance of their office in the years but in the reading." Cartwright, op. cit., p. 20.

⁷⁸Robert Browne spoke against the low calibre of the ministry in the Church of England and the poor quality of the services held there. "Further whereas the lawe doeth binde vs to come to church, it doth well, for no man ought to refuse the Church of God, yet if when we come to the church, we finde there an vnlawful minister, and a wicked congregation of all sortes of people, the fault is not nowe in the lawe but in the Byshoppes which place such ministers, and in their spiritual courtes which are authors of such confusion: for the law commaundeth that the minister should be Doctus and Clericus, for a clergie man: otherwise how should he be Clericus that is one of the Lordes inheritance. But the Bishops count him learned if he can but reade onely, and answere to a catechisme as doe children: . . . and if they see to it, that men shall come to church, they will first see that the church be better ordered that men may come with comforte, and not with heart burning to their conscience." Harrison, op. cit., p. 435.

which permitted the domination of the prelacy. Such expressions were an indication of the emergence of the doctrine of social and individual responsibility in spite of the low level of public morals and established social patterns. He believed that it was the people's responsibility to protect their liberties and not allow themselves to be shackled to systems which would deny them their just prerogatives of initiative and freedom. This choice was ordained by God to designate the human family. In a rather regal paragraph, Robinson outlined the authority of such a claim:

Now as the forenamed scriptures [Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18, 19] like a gracious charter given to this spiritual corporation, the church by the King thereof, Jesus Christ, do clearly plead the people's liberty, and power of the choice of their ministers, so I will add unto them certain reasons, to prove this order, and ordinance to be of moral, and perpetual equity.⁷⁹

Robinson's belief in the autonomy of the local congregation and its right to govern itself was a doctrine with two implications. The first was the authority of the scriptures which laid down the principle that members of the congregation should select their own officers. The second implication of this doctrine was a number of rational reasons illustrating why this form of government would be the most suitable for the accomplishment of the stated ends for which the church exists.

Robinson's arguments may be seen also as a statement of the growing acceptance of the idea that justice was an obligation affecting royalty and that a leader's authority should lie in the fact that he serves his people with their consent and blessing. The transition

⁷⁹Robinson, Works, II, 396.

from authority to reason as the basis of action marked a new day in the development of a person, a people, or a nation.

The following are four reasons Robinson listed in support of the people's choosing their own officers:

1) The first is because the bond between the minister, and people is the most strait, and near religious bond that may be, and therefore not to be entered but with mutual consent, any more than the civil bond of marriage between the husband, and wife.

2) It makes both much for the provocation of the minister unto all diligence and faithfulness: and also for his comfort in all the trials and temptations which befall him in his ministry, when he considereth how the people, unto whom he ministereth, have committed that most rich treasure of their souls, in the lord, yea, I may say, of their very faith, and joy, to be helped forward unto salvation, to his care and charge by their free and voluntary choice of him.

3) It much furthers the love of the people to the person of their minister, and so, consequently, their obedience unto his doctrine, and government, when he is such a one, as themselves in duty unto God, and love of their own salvation, have made choice of: as on the contrary, it leaves them without excuse, if they either perfidiously forsake, or unprofitably use such a man's holy service, and ministration.

4) Lastly, it is agreeable to all equity, and reason, that all free persons, and estates should choose their own servants, and them unto whom they give wages, and maintenance for their labor, and service. But so it is betwixt the people, and ministers: the people a free people, and the church a free estate spiritual, under Christ the king; the ministers the church's, as Christ's servants: and so by the church's provision to live, and of her, as labourers to receive wages.⁸⁰

The above understanding of the ministry ran counter to that of the establishment. In the Church of England there was a division between the upper and lower levels of the ministry. The higher was that performed by the bishops which included the work of organization,

⁸⁰Ibid.

ordination, and excommunication. The work of the local minister dealt with the administration of the Word, sacraments and prayer. Robinson suggested that the higher ministry superseded the lower only as darkness follows light. He noted:

When the apostles were sent out by Christ, there was not mention of ordination; their charge was to teach all nations and baptize them; and that the apostles accounted preaching their principal work, and after it baptism, and prayer, the scriptures manifest.⁸¹

He continued the argument by suggesting that if ordination had been such an important work, Paul would have remained in Crete to ordain the elders. He would have sent Titus, a lower officer, about the business of preaching which was considered inferior. Instead he went about while Titus remained in Crete to handle ordinations. Titus 1:5.

Robinson did not deny the importance or validity of ordination, but he questioned who should perform it and exactly what it should signify. He thought the ordination and selection of a church officer should proceed in the same manner in which a civil magistrate was selected. In this manner the mayor or bailiff is first chosen by the people to the office. He does not actually become an incumbent until the solemn ceremony when the city's keys or sword, or some other symbol, is put into his hand by his predecessor.

So it is with the ministers, the officers of this spiritual corporation in the church, the right unto their offices they have by election, the possession of them by ordination, with the ceremony of imposition of hands.⁸²

In a civil situation, it would have been unthinkable for the magistrate elected in one city to travel to another for the purpose of ordaining

⁸¹Ibid., II, 437.

⁸²Ibid.

a civil officer. Clearly, since the people of that city had not elected him to govern them, he had no just authority over them. It was obvious that this principle could not be followed in the first New Testament churches, for the apostles traveled from one city to another, performing the first act of ordination. However, this ordination, once having been performed upon those whom the local congregation had appointed, was to be continued by the local officers.

Robinson believed that a company of people in covenant with each other and the gospel constituted a church. They could have immediate interest in all the holy things of God without any foreign assistance. He further believed that any private member could perform the services of an officer. In addition, the church might elect this person to hold an office and thereby serve the church. If no ordained individuals were in the congregation, a fit person might be selected to perform certain services.⁸³ The ordained person could ordain his successor.

⁸³This matter soon became a practical concern in the Plymouth Colony. In a letter to William Brewster on December 20, 1623, Robinson answered Brewster's question on whether he should perform the sacraments: "Now, touching the question propounded by you, I judge it not lawful for you (being a ruling Elder, as Romans 12:7 and 8, and I Timothy 5:17 opposed to the Elders that teach and exhort and labour in the Word and doctrine, to which the sacraments are annexed), to administer them, nor convenient if it were lawful." Bradford, *op. cit.*, p. 377. He further suggested that if a learned man should come to the colony they should take counsel and determine whether he be qualified to lead in the sacraments. Until that time Brewster was to give them what service he could as preacher but he was not to administer the sacraments. The stability of the Plymouth church is a tribute to his leadership. Bradford records the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the four ministers who came to the colony between 1623 and 1636 when a worthy minister was finally secured. At that time, Rev. John Rayner assumed the leadership of the congregation and held it until 1654.

Francis Johnson concurred with Robinson in this matter and

The service of ordination or excommunication was not to be performed at the whim of the magistrate, but by the direction of the people. The officers, being ministers of the church, were to execute its judgments. Hence the authority of the ministry over the lives of the members was given by the congregation, and by them alone.

Robinson recognized that his position even though based on scripture and reason, would probably have little influence because of the obscurity of his own standing. He bolstered his position therefore with statements from a number of significant and well-known personages. The first was Mr. William Perkins who wrote about ordination and succession in his commentary on the book of Galatians:

If in Turk, or America, or elsewhere, the gospel should bee received of men, by the counsell and persvasion of private persons, they should not neede to send into Europe for consecrated Ministers, but they have power to choose their own ministers from within themselves: because where God gives the word, he gives the power also. . . . whether heathenish or anti-christian, and receiving the gospel of Christ, do with the gospel receive the power also: and so may choose their ministers within themselves: and need not send to any other place, no, not to the next parist for consecrated ministers.⁸⁴

Philip Melanchthon had also argued in the same vein against the established ministers in Bohemia. He based his belief on Gal. 1:8, "If any teach another gospel, let him be anathema." He then continued:

Only the assembly where true doctrine soundeth is the church: and that in it is the ministry of the gospel: in it are the keys of

stated: "And the ministration of the sacraments, and blessing of the bread and wine, is a work of the ministerie." Johnson, A Short Treatise, p. 287.

⁸⁴Robinson, Works, II, 446. See also William Perkins, The Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge (London: John Legatt, 1613), II, 172.

the kingdom of heaven. Wherefore in that very assembly, in eo ipso coetu, there is the right of calling, and ordaining the ministers of the gospel, because we must fly the enemies of the gospel, as an anathema. And besides, saith he . . . if we should desire of them the ceremony of ordination, they would not give it, except we would bind ourselves to renounce the true doctrine; and other wicked bonds would they cast upon us. Neither therefore ought the true church to be without pastors, without the keys, without the voice of the gospel, without forgiveness of sins, because the tyranny of the bishops either drives away, or refuses to appoint fit ministers. And again, it is the confusion of order to seek shepherds from the wolves. And lastly, this hath ever been the right of the true church, to choose, and call out of her own assembly fit ministers of the gospel.⁸⁵

Robinson then quoted an Italian exile commonly known as Peter Martyr.⁸⁶ Martyr was in England at the invitation of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer who had called a number of leading reformers to England at the accession of Edward VI. Large crowds attended Martyr's lectures on Biblical topics. His presentation on the Eucharist caused dissension. Cranmer and Ridley agreed that the real presence was within the faith

⁸⁵Robinson, Works, II, 446.

⁸⁶His real name was Pietro Martire Vermigli. He was born in Florence in 1500 to well-to-do parents, Stephan Vermigli, a follower of Savarola, and Maria Fumantina. The name of Martyr was given him because his father vowed, after a number of his children had died in infancy, that any who survived would be dedicated to the thirteenth-century Dominican saint, Peter Martyr. His Oxford lectures on 1st Corinthians were published in Zurich in 1551 and those on Romans in 1558. In 1559 appeared his Defensio doctrinae veteris et apostolicae de S. Eucharistiae sacramento, and also his Defensio ad R. Smythaei duos libellos de coelibatu sacerdotum et votis monasticis. The Dialogus de utraque Christi natura dates from 1561; and after his death a number of his commentaries on books of the Old Testament were published by his friends. In 1574, a French preacher in London, published a folio volume of loci communes from Martyr's writings, digested according to the method of Calvin's theological system. Peter Martyr, The Common Places of the Most Famous and Renowned Divine Doctor Peter Martyr (1574). Cf. Schlosser's Leben des Th. Beza u. des P. M. Vermigli (Heidelberg: 1807), and Charles Guillaume Adolphe Schmidt, Peter Martyr Vermigli. Leben ausgewahltz schriften (Eberfeld: R. L. Friderichs, 1858), Vol. VII.

of the person receiving it. Nevertheless, Martyr was forced to retire from London until the storm subsided and with the accession of Mary, he left England after having been a prisoner in his own house for six weeks. Robinson quoted his statement regarding ordination:

Touching the ecclesiastical ministry we have signified before, that it may not be committed to women, and that they are not fit for it. But now we add, that, in the planting of churches anew, when men want, which should preach the gospel, a woman may perform that, at the first; but so as when she hath taught any company, that some one man of the faithful be ordained, which may afterwards minister the sacraments, teach, and do the pastor's duty faithfully.⁸⁷

Robinson then introduced a statement from Zanchius.⁸⁸ He inquired whether a Turk who had come to a knowledge of the gospel by reading the scriptures could baptize his family although he had never been baptized.

I doubt not of it, but that he may, and withal provide, that he himself be baptized of one of the three converted by him. He is a minister of the Word extraordinarily stirred up of Christ: and so, as such a minister may, with the consent of that small church, appoint one of the communicants, and provide, that he be baptized by him.⁸⁹

⁸⁷Robinson, Works, II, 446.

⁸⁸Hieronymus Zanchius, Opera Theologia, tom., vi, cap. iv, p. 225. Jerome Zanchius (1516-1590), was one of the most learned of the Reformers. He left the Roman Church after hearing Peter Martyr preach. His first position was a professorship in Strassburg, he then pastored a church on the borders of Italy and returned to teaching at Heidelberg. He was noted for his piety and his firmness in holding what he believed to be true. Alexander Chalmers, The General Biographical Dictionary (London: N. Nichols, 1817), XXXII, 420. Zanchius' most notable work was Zanchius, His Confession of Christian Religion (Cambridge: John Legatt, 1599). Cf. Hieronymus Zanchius, The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted with a Preliminary Discourse on the Divine Attributes (Philadelphia: Stewart and Cochran, 1792).

⁸⁹Robinson, Works, II, 447.

The last statement was from Sadeel⁹⁰ who attacked the corruption of the Roman ministry. Speaking of the purity of his own church, he says:

They are called, chosen, and received of these assemblies which do appear of manifest signs, and arguments to be true churches: as having the true doctrine of faith, the pure administration of the sacraments, the right and sincere invocation of God's name, observing rigidly the discipline instituted by Christ and his apostles: and lastly testifying by the duties of love, constancy of martyrs, and reformation of the whole life, that they are by the great mercy of God, adopted into the number of the faithful, as members of the catholic church.⁹¹

If the church had the power to appoint its officers, it also had power to set them down. In this power was the protection they sought from ecclesiastical tyranny. Separatist churchmen did not believe that people out of office were in any way inferior to those actually holding positions of responsibility. They felt the governing power rested ultimately with the people.

VII. THE PLACE OF PREACHING

If a single word could characterize the relationship between the Puritan and his church, that word would probably be "involvement" or perhaps "interaction." The church was his own; no member had rights

⁹⁰Antonii Sadeelis, Opera Theologica, Tract xi, p. 41, fol. 1615. Sadeel is a pseudonym for Antoine de la Roche Chandieu (ca. 1534-1591). Among his writings is a work entitled De Legitima Vocatione Pastorum Ecclesiae Reformatae (1583). Antoine Sadeel Chandaiei was a professor of Hebrew at Geneva. His early studies were devoted to the field of law but he turned to divinity and ultimately produced a number of important works, notably his Opera Theologica (Geneva, 1592). Chalmers, op. cit., XXVII, 23.

⁹¹Robinson, Works, II, 448.

which he did not possess; no man had authority which he did not grant; no phase of the church's activity was beyond his concern and interest. Such involvement and interaction was deemed imperative if the church was to accomplish the goal of full and complete communion. It was recognized that some of the members were incapable of complete communion. For example, a child might have reached the age of baptism but not yet be fully able to understand its significance. Robinson described the communion which responsible adults might experience:

In preaching, prayer, the Lord's Supper, psalms, elections, and alms, all communicate though with some difference of order and manner of the thing. In the first which is preaching, all communicate, one officer teacheth, and the rest, both officers and people are taught: in prayer, one officer utters his voice, and the rest of the church say amen, and so all communicate: in the Lord's supper, all communicate, one by giving, or administering, and all the rest by receiving with him: in singing of psalms all communicate, yea and that vocally, and together where they can all combine and concur without disorder: in elections all choose, or are chosen: in the distribution of alms, all either give or receive, and so communicate together.⁹²

With a communion of this kind, it is apparent that a close relationship between the officers and the people was an absolute necessity. And indolent clergyman appointed by a distant bishop would never desire to achieve such a relationship. If the incumbent was a non-resident who had hired another to take his place, he would be even further from the hearts of the members.

⁹²Ibid., II, 245. In a brief paper entitled "What Good The Pvblick Preaching Doth," Robert Browne compares the converts of the bishops to the followers of the scribes and pharisees as described in Matthew 23: "So these vvhen thei vvere gone a litle forvvard, & had brought others after them, thei then turned aside, & made their follovvvers more careles of goodnes then euer thei vvere, yea & not onelie careles, but dispightfull & most bitter persecutor, if anie went beyond the, or vvere more tovveard then thei." In Harrison, op. cit., p. 411.

The Puritans took seriously Paul's instruction relative to the selection of bishops. He was to be a person who could preach, be able to exhort the congregation with sound doctrine and convince the gain-sayers. A person should demonstrate these qualifications before being appointed to an office. No one was expected suddenly to manifest such gifts as the ability to preach and a sound knowledge of the scriptures merely because he had been appointed. In order to demonstrate and cultivate these capacities, therefore, all members of the congregation, with the exception of the women, were expected to take part in the service--to pray--to preach if called upon, and to counsel in matters of discipline and church government and teach the ignorant. Robinson suggested:

And that minister, that is not called upon the church's experimental knowledge of his sufficiency in these things, comes not in by the door, which Christ has opened, nor may be accounted a true member of Christ, and his church.⁹³

Robinson reasoned that any man if qualified, though not in office, could preach. It would not be possible otherwise for people in a universally heathen land, or for those living in a realm governed by Antichrist, to ever come to know the gospel. It must be taught before true churches could be formed and officers duly appointed. How else could the truth be proclaimed, for heathenish and antichristian ministers could not be expected to preach the truth. Robinson marvelled that:

⁹³Robinson, Works, II, 250.

. . . the Church of England hath preferred a dumb mass, and profane priesthood with a service book before this ordinance, yet the truth of Christ is otherwise, and so the Church of Christ, is taught to practice.⁹⁴

The Puritan regarded the local church as a self-sufficient organization that did not depend upon the administrative abilities of the bishop. Neither did it depend upon the seminaries to provide its ministers, or the prayer book to determine its form of worship. The church was a center where the scriptures were taught to those anxious to grow in grace. It was apparent that a person should be chosen to office only after he had demonstrated the ability to assume responsibility. An officer was expected to be able to debate, discuss and carry out the church matters with dispatch. He might be called upon to admonish and exhort and comfort. It was considered a presumptuous act to elect a man who had not manifested these attributes.

He that is not a prophet, or hath not the gift of prophesying or preaching (for by his gift he is a prophet, and by the use of it he occupies the place of the prophet) before he be appointed a pastor, is an idol shepherd set up in the temple of God; neither doth the office either give or so much as indeed increase the gift, but only gives solemn commission and charge to use it.⁹⁵

One of Robinson's most poignant comments on the significance of preaching is to be found in his A Defense of the Doctrine Propounded by

⁹⁴Ibid. Henry Ainsworth had earlier expressed a similar criticism of the Church of England in his Counterpoyson: "The great transgressions which your people dayly comit in Gods publick worship whiles you have your own will worship, and stinted prayers, without warrant from Christ's testament, read in place of God true spiritual service; these are not preached against, reprov'd or cast out by your ministers doctrine; but contrariwise, they have by word and writing fought to mainteyne the same." Ainsworth, op. cit., p. 76.

⁹⁵Robinson, Works, III, 310.

the Synod at Dort, Against John Murton and His Associates. To the assertion, "the pastor is not required to preach, nor doth perform it by virtue of his office when he doth it," he responded:

Many men, and these with the rest, have spoken many absurd things in religion: but these in this exceed them all, yea and themselves. They from Acts 28, affirm that the pastors are to feed the flock from their office. And can the flock be fed as it ought without preaching, and where the bread of life is not broken unto it? They also grant in the same place, from Titus 1:9, that he is to defend the flock in truth against all gainsayers. But why to defend the flock, &c., as their cunning and corrupt gloss is, rather than as the words of the text are, by sound doctrine both to exhort, and convince the gainsayers? Are exhortations and convictions by sound doctrines no preachings with these men? yea, are they not directly for the conversion of gainsayers? And how then belongs it not to pastors, to whom these things belong, to convert? So where is it required that the bishop, to be called, be apt to teach, I Tim. 3:2, is he not by his office to do that which is requisite in him for his enabling unto it? I say for the enabling of him to his office, and not for the adorning of it only, as hospitality is: which though he only want ability to perform, yet that disables him not; as the want of aptness to teach doth.

Join with these the apostles exhortation, that the elders that rule well be had in double honor; specially they that labor in the word, and doctrine; "for the laborer is worthy of his reward," I Tim. 5:17: and what can be clearer, than that the pastor is to preach by his office, and that as being the special work, for which his wages are due unto him? Is not to labor in the word and doctrine here spoken of, for him to preach, and that as an elder; as the former rule of elders? Strange it is that, a pastor or teacher by office, should not teach and preach by office; that is, not exercise their office or ministry, the teacher in teaching, and exhorter, or pastor, in exhortation. Rom. 12:5,7,8. And see we not here, what new patrons dumb ministers have gotten, of whom the old almost everywhere are ashamed? If it be not required by the pastor to preach by his office, then though he never preach at all, yet it cannot be said to Archippus, "Fulfill thy ministry, which thou hast received in the Lord." Col. 4:17. The pastor, might by their canon, most faithfully perform and fulfill his office, though he never preached one sermon all his life long.

For first, the ability or gift to preach is not by the office, but before it, and merely personal, and so remains even in the officer; and the same greater in one man than in another, though the office be the same in both. Yet because the gift fits for the

office, and enables for the performing of it, many unskillfully confound them.⁹⁶

VIII. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

There were three integral constituents to the Puritan church; the preaching of the gospel, the correct administration of the sacraments, and church discipline. The necessary function of church government which involved all three included the complete outward ordering, directing and guidance of the church in all its affairs. The officers of the church were to feed the sheep, to teach them, and to rule them. The liberty and authority of the church expressed itself in three areas: the exercise of prophecy, the choice of officers and the censuring of offenders.

The Puritans regarded Christ's stipulation in Matthew 18:17 as binding and did not hesitate to counsel with open sinners in their midst. If repentance was not forthcoming, they would bring them before the church. The fact that Paul severely criticized the church at Corinth for not taking action against an incestuous brother was frequently recited. The Puritans took their obligation to exercise discipline seriously.

While the Puritans were great enemies of sin and did not hesitate to exercise strong control over their own ranks, they made no effort to regulate the behavior of non-puritans.⁹⁷ They claimed that

⁹⁶Ibid., I, 459.

⁹⁷Richard Hooker's observations had made him skeptical of the value of such tolerance. Regarding the reformers, he stated: "These

a magistrate's or prelate's authority and jurisdiction should come not from the office but from the people who elected him to that office.

The Puritans regarded church discipline as more than negative punishment. They insisted that it was truly redemptive in character. It should be noted that Robinson stated he would decline his position as pastor if the pastor were beyond the discipline of the church. He feared that he might someday slip momentarily into sin and if not subject to discipline, he would be denied an aid to salvation available to every other member of the church.

The power of church discipline coincided with the right to separate persons from and join new members to the congregation. If the group had the right to admit new members, then it also had the right to separate errant and disobedient members. The ministry of church discipline was clearly linked to the preaching of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel was the accepted method for reaching the repentent, but for the incorrigible, another technique was employed.

The preaching of the Gospel is the power of God unto everyone that believeth, Ro 1:16: excommunication is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the destruction of the flesh of him that is

men at the first were only pitied in their error, and not much withstood by any; the great humility, zeal, and devotion, which appeared to be in them, was in all men's opinion a pledge of their harmless meaning. The hardest that men of sound understanding conceived of them was but this, 'O quam honesta voluntate miseri errant!' With how good a 'meaning these poor souls do evil!'By means of which merciful toleration they gathered strength, much more than was safe for the state of the commonwealth wherein they lived. They had their secret corner-meetings and assemblies in the night, the people flocked unto them by thousands." Hooker, op. cit., Preface, Chap. viii. 9.

otherwise incorrigible, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁹⁸

When Robinson described the ministry as a work of feeding the flock, he included preaching and discipline. These twin works were of such great importance that they were both performed before the audience of the whole congregation.

. . . both of them main and necessary parts of God's worship and of religion, and so to be performed upon the Lord's day, as his work and in the assembly of the saints, as an exercise of holy communion.⁹⁹

He bitterly denounced the form in which discipline was meted out in the Anglican church. It was done at the discretion of the bishops, without the consent of the congregation, and in private so that no organized opposition could thwart its purposes. It was not done with the salvation of the sinner in mind, as held by the Puritans, but rather to put an end to opposition of the church.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Robinson, Works, II, 368.

⁹⁹Ibid., II, 369.

¹⁰⁰"The canon law of the medieval church and the ecclesiastical courts which administered it . . . survived the break from Rome and continued to have jurisdiction over those persons and in those cases which were recognized as its proper field.

"It has jurisdiction, not only over all clergymen, but over those who could justify a claim to benefit of clergy. In the common law courts a man accused of felony could claim clergy and establish his claim by reading scripture, and so avoid capital punishment. Ben Jonson, the poet, escaped hanging by that appeal.

"The church court also had jurisdiction over the laity in a variety of cases, such as marriage, kinship, testamentary inheritance, blasphemy, heresy, and other cases of the same sort. The line between what case belonged to the church courts and what to the courts of common law was an uncertain one and the cause of a good deal of dispute later.

The failure to exercise church discipline allows the leaven of sin to effect the whole lump, making the particular congregation an accessory to the sin that had gone unpunished. To allow the matter to pass brings the whole congregation under the condemnation of the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples, "Tell it to the Church."

The Puritan did not assume that all the benefits of church discipline were reserved for the offending sinner, but that the church would

"So far as the average Englishman was concerned, his objection to the ecclesiastical courts was that they provided none of the safeguards for the defendant which he had come to regard as basic in English justice. There was no jury trial; the defendant could be forced to testify under oath against himself in matters incriminating. Legal or not, it was not British.

"The chief offender in this regard was the so-called Court of High Commission, set up by the Queen in 1559 to implement the royal supremacy over the church. It was not primarily an ecclesiastical court but rather a prerogative court dealing particularly with offenses against the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. But it followed ecclesiastical procedure. In composition it was a mixed company of bishops, Privy Councillors, civilians, sergeants-at-law, and suchlike, nineteen all told in the original commission, of whom seven constituted a quorum. Later commissions enlarged the membership and reduced the number of the quorum, so that different sections could be sitting in different places at the same time. Archbishop Whitgift made use of it in his attack upon the puritans and aroused a great deal of opposition among the friends of the Puritans in the House of Commons and the Privy Council. Lord Burghley wrote to Whitgift that though the canonists might defend it, it smacked too much of the Roman inquisition.

"Whitgift stuck to his guns and with the help of the Queen rather more than held his own. But those who were arrayed against him, the Puritans and the common lawyers, carried on the fight and ultimately not only did away with the Court of High Commission but with the established church itself."

Conyers Read, The Government of England under Elizabeth (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1960), pp. 24-25. See also, Marchant, op. cit., p. 6.

also be benefited by having been kept pure from the presence of defilement. Without the power of excommunication, heresies would abound in the church. It would become the "habitation of devils" and the "cage of every unclean and hateful bird." By the censures of the church, it would be kept free from open sinners, ready to represent the spotless Christ before the wicked world. Finally:

To these I add a fifth and last reason, that as the glory of God, and salvation of them without, are most furthered and advantaged by the holy conversation of the members of the church, Matt. 5:16; I Peter 2:12; 3:1; Rom. 2:24: and on the contrary most disadvantaged, and hindered, by their unholy and profane courses: so is the power of excommunication, by which solemn ordinance alone, profaneness and impiety are rooted out, of absolute necessity for the churches of Christ. And of this point, I desire the reader to take knowledge not only as a matter of truth, but of conscience also, and for practice.¹⁰¹

While church discipline was to be a matter for the entire congregation because of its punitive and didactic nature, it was not assumed that all matters of business and routine were to be presented to the entire congregation. Robinson did not advocate a completely democratic procedure of church government. He felt, rather, that a representative form of administration should handle most of the routine details. In three steps, he outlined the organization of their church:

1) We believe that the external church government under Christ, the only mediator and monarch thereof, is plainly aristocratical, and to be administered by certain choice men, although the state, which many unskillfully confound with the government, be after a sort popular and democratical. By this it appertains to the people freely to vote in elections and judgments of the church: in respect to the other, we make account it behooves the elders to govern the people, even in their voting, in just liberty, given by Christ what-so-ever. I Cor. 12:28; I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 8:17. Let the

¹⁰¹Robinson, Works, II, 370.

elders publically propound, and order all things in the church, and so give their sentence to them; let them reprove them that sin, convince the gainsayers, comfort the repentant, and so administer all things according to the prescript of God's word: Let the people of faith give their assent to their elder's holy and lawful administration: that so the ecclesiastical elections and censures may be ratified, and put into solemn execution by the elders, either in ordination of officers after election, or excommunication of offenders after obstinacy in sin.

2) We doubt not that the elders both lawfully may, and necessarily ought, and that by virtue of their office, to meet apart at times from the body of the church, to deliberate of such things as concern her welfare, as for the preventing of things unnecessary, so for the preparing according to just order, or things necessary, so as publically and before the people, they may be prosecuted with most consistency, and least trouble, that may be. Acts 20:18.

3) By the people whose liberty, and right in voting, we thus avow, and stand for, in matters truly public and ecclesiastical, we do not understand, as it hath pleased some contumeliously to upbraid us, women and children; but only men and them grown, and of discretion: making account, that as children by their non-age, so women by their sex are debarred of the use of authority in the church. I Cor. 14:34,35; I Tim. 2:12.¹⁰²

We see within the Puritan ecclesiastical polity, the seeds of representative political government in which the ultimate authority lies in the will of the people who commit responsibility to elected officials who represent them, make their wishes known, and act in accordance with their will in matters that concern them.¹⁰³ In this system, a complete democracy is sacrificed for the sake of efficiency and expediency. The larger the body becomes, the more imperative the representative form of government.

¹⁰²Ibid., III, 42.

¹⁰³Cf. G. P. Gooch, English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 7, 13.

The thinking which underlay the developing political structure of the times also permeated the church.¹⁰⁴ The expanding power of the landowners, the rise of the merchant class and the abandonment of the theory of the divine right of kings tended to diminish the awe once accorded to the magistrates, particularly the king.¹⁰⁵ Those who wished for reforms began to have the power to effect them.¹⁰⁶

Puritans found support for their views regarding the nature of the church both from the scriptures and from the trends of the time. The signing of the Magna Carta four centuries before had signaled the replacement of the rule of men by the government of law. The tendency of Tudor and Stuart monarchs toward taking government into their own hands caused a reaction which ultimately resulted in the supremacy of

¹⁰⁴John Neville Figgis, The Divine Right of Kings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 15. The interest of the subject is great. It marks the transition from mediaeval to modern modes of thought. In studying it we see the links of connection between thinkers like Dante and Ockham on the one hand, and Locke and Rousseau on the other, while, despite the notion of natural rights, Locke and Sidney with their strong vein of Utilitarian sentiment are plainly the forerunners of Bentham and Mill.

¹⁰⁵That the king is below the law is a doctrine which even a royal justice might fearlessly have proclaimed. The theory that in every state there must be some man or definite body of men above the law, some 'sovereign' without duties and obligations would have been rejected. Frederick Pollack and Frederick Maitland, The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895), I, 160.

¹⁰⁶Lawrence Stone offers an extensive discussion of the social changes occurring in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He focuses on the problem of the aristocracy and their attempt to maintain their position and prestige in the increasingly democratic world. Stone, op. cit.

Parliament over the crown.¹⁰⁷ The trend was away from the judgment of a single individual toward the opinion of the majority. Majority opinion does not guarantee justice, but it will seldom allow the extremes in judgment which an individual may permit. The courts began to interpret the will of the people in codified form and educated people gradually come to accept the supremacy of the common law.¹⁰⁸

Robinson pointed out that the opinion of the church and the state might occasionally conflict because they would deal with the same problem with differing perspectives.

Take your own instance of murder. The magistrate is to punish it civilly in all his subjects, whether the parties repent or no; the church is to censure it ecclesiastically in her members, yea though the magistrate pardon or pass it by, except the parties delinquent repent, for then they are to be forgiven.¹⁰⁹

The censures of the church had several ends in mind; first, to attach a stigma to the sin in order that it would appear odious to others who might be similarly tempted; secondly, to encourage the recalcitrant individual to repent and avoid damnation; thirdly, to give a public indication that the church did not approve of such behavior. This latter concern seems to be a factor when the church regards the world as evil. Salvation is found in withdrawing from the world,

¹⁰⁷Mosheim lists three purposes of the reign of Charles I. The first is: "The extending of the Royal prerogative and raising the power of the crown above the authority of the law." John Lawrence Mosheim, An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern (New York: Evert Duyckinck, Collins and Hannoy, Collins and Company, 1824), IV, 95.

¹⁰⁸Neill, Anglicanism, p. 148.

¹⁰⁹Robinson, Works, II, 193.

cloaking oneself in a halo of piety and exercising a rigid control on external behavior.

A practical, non-theological reason for placing the responsibility of church discipline in the hands of the members rather than the officers was to remove it from unscrupulous priests, bishops, and archbishops and archdeacons. In the following paragraph Robinson spelled out the concern:

Well, the words are clear as the sun, "tell the church," that is, the congregation or assembly whereof the offender is a member. But where you make the church, not the officers simply, but the chief officers, there in you deal both wisely and dutifully. Wisely to let pass other respects, in preventing a question, which otherwise you could not possibly answer; for if you had said the officers simply, it would have demanded of you where you and your fellow minister's power of excommunication had been; dutifully, and as an obedient child in giving the rod of discipline into the hands of your reverend fathers alone, and their substitutes. Well, Mr. B. /Bernard/ whomsoever the Lord Jesus meant by the church, Matt. 18, he never meant the Archbishop of York,¹¹⁰ the Archdeacon of Nottingham,¹¹¹ the official of Southwell, were the church of Worksop: and for this I will spare all arguments, and send you to your own guilty conscience for conviction, which as it condemns you in yourself, which is also the case of many thousands in the land, so do I earnestly wish both you and them to remember with fear and trembling the condemnation of him that is greater than your conscience.¹¹²

In another statement Robinson reaffirms the certitude of his position that "tell the church," means the entire congregation. Their right to exercise the censures of the church is an inalienable one:

¹¹⁰The Archbishop of York was Tobias Matthew (1606-1628). S. L. Ollard and Gordon Crosse, A Dictionary of English Church History (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1919), p. 666.

¹¹¹The Archdeacon of Nottingham was Joseph Hall (1611-?). Ronald A. Marchant, op. cit., p. 188.

¹¹²Robinson, Works, II, 179.

. . . Christ never deprives his church of this spiritual power of excommunication, neither can it be impeached by any outward violence; only antichrist exalting himself above all that is called the church of God, and of Christ, of this liberty, and power; and so all those churches, or congregations over whom he thus usurpeth receive his mark, and are in that respect subject to his judgment.¹¹³

The relationship of the various parts of the body was often used to describe the church laity and the church officers. Richard Bernard suggested that the faculty to excommunicate might be compared to seeing, hearing or talking. Robinson disliked this comparison and suggested an alternative:

It is more fitly resembled to the want of power to void and purge excrements, which is prodigious in nature; and so neither the natural nor spiritual body can live.¹¹⁴

He also suggested that certain parts of the body might be compared to certain of the officers--the eyes and mouth being the bishop and elders who oversee and teach the church, and the hands are the deacons who distribute the alms. He noted that a body might live quite well without a hand or an eye, but loss of the power to excrete meant certain death to the organism.

Excommunication separated the offender from the congregation. Believers were not to tolerate the obstinate fellow but were to deny him the pleasures of social intercourse and civil fellowship. The separation of the Jewish nation from the surrounding nations was held to be a desirable thing. Paul had given counsel to the church against associating and eating with unbelievers. Christ's statement about the

¹¹³Ibid., II, 368.

¹¹⁴Ibid., II, 369.

church receiving the power to bind in heaven as well as earth gave further confidence to Puritan claims regarding church censures. Church discipline was not to be taken lightly or disregarded with impunity.

Because your church at Worksop can reform no abuse within itself, but must complain to your Lord's grace of York, or his substitute, therefore you imagine the church of Corinth to have been in the same bondage, wherein you are: and Chloe to have complained to Paul's court. But it is plain, Mr. B. Bernard to them that do not shut their eyes, and harden their hearts against the truth: that the Church of Corinth was planted in the liberty of the Gospel, and had this power of Christ to reform abuses, and to excommunicate offenders, without sending to Paul from one part of the world to another, and that the Corinthians, Chap. 5., are reprov'd for failing in this duty.¹¹⁵

The Puritans did not regret church discipline but rather felt it was a necessary and integral part of the ministration of the officers of the church body. The will of God was by this means both emphasized and impressed upon them. They were unwilling to separate the goodness of God from the justice of God. Even his censures were good because they kept a person from greater rebellion which might result in his eternal damnation. Robinson presented this view in the following paragraph:

Now as the priestly and prophetic offices of Christ are administered in prayer and preaching, so is his kingly office in government. Indeed, if we thought, as you do, that Christ had left his kingdom, the church, without laws and officers for the government of it, or that this government were an indifferent thing, alterable at the will and pleasure of men, then we should be as indifferent, where, or how, or by whom it was administered, as you and Mr. B. Bernard are.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵Ibid., II, 199.

¹¹⁶Ibid., II, 240

The sins which had become obvious in the obstinate were often latent in the remainder of the flock. Sinners were therefore admonished publicly in the hope of restraining and possibly altering the intentions of those who might be contemplating similar acts. If this service were performed in secret, the flock would not be fed, thereby making the officers guilty of failing to respond to an important need of the people.

The administration of Christ's kingdom was a part of the communion of saints and was to be performed on the Lord's day in the presence of the congregation. It was equal in importance to the preaching of the word, the offering of the sacraments, and the giving of alms. If they were not performed on the Lord's day in the presence of the people, they gave no benefit to the congregation.

Robinson introduced a further practical difficulty. If the censures were conducted on a day other than the Lord's day, then a man would be required to leave his source of income for that day. On six days God had given man liberty to work. Therefore he was to carry out the work of the church on a weekday which appeared to be an unjust imposition.

CHAPTER II

JOHN ROBINSON: HIS THEOLOGY AND THE SYNOD OF DORT

The reformation had been received warmly in the Netherlands and quickly came to be associated with the struggle for political independence which gripped that area in the sixteenth century. While Martin Luther's ideas were spreading over Saxon provinces, Charles V was attempting to consolidate the Low Countries into a political entity.

Charles took as his pattern for consolidation, the manner of the emerging states of western Europe. A significant part of his effort was the establishment of episcopal sees as an aid to more efficient discipline. Throughout this period the Netherlands were marked by a number of interesting paradoxes. Within a medieval constitution there existed a monarchy with a centralizing nucleus. Under the direction of the upper middle class a vigorous revolutionary democracy flourished, its energies having been aroused by the Calvinist church. The wise tolerance of the merchants and the fanatical zeal of the Orthodox ministers hung in an uneasy balance.¹

¹G. J. Renier, The Dutch Nation (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1944), pp. 35-36. J. N. Figgis offers an excellent description of the political and social changes being effected in the Netherlands from the 15th to the midpoint of the 17th century: John Neville Figgis, Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius, 1414-1625 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960). Cf. The Cambridge Modern History (London: Macmillan, 1905), III. Chapter VI covers "The Revolt of the Netherlands 1555-68"; VII, "William the Silent 1568-84"; and XIX, "The Dutch Republic 1584-1625." These articles were prepared by George Edmundson.

The writings of Martin Luther were widely accepted in the Netherlands. Their reception had been prepared by the movements of the previous century which had brought the Brethren of the Common Life, Christian Mysticism and Humanism to the attention of the people. Of the Imitation of Christ² had been composed here and it was the homeland of Erasmus. Between 1513 and 1531 more than a score of Bible translations had been produced.³

The dominant religious persuasion was Roman Catholic. In spite of the efforts of Charles V, Lutheranism continued to prosper. By the fourth quarter of the sixteenth century, Calvinism had begun to supplant it. The Doctrines of Geneva had gained a strong foothold among the influential merchant classes.

In 1555 Charles V abdicated his throne in favor of Phillip II, who attempted to continue the policies of his father until his own departure from the Netherlands. From that time his rule was carried on by his illegitimate half-sister Margaret, the Duchess of Parma, and a Council of State. Spanish troops sent to put down opposition and heresy aroused the anger of the local population. Riots and widespread rebellion ravaged the land.⁴

²Thomas a Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ (Augsburg, 1471-1472).

³The Cambridge History of the Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), II, 122-125.

⁴Petrus Johannes Blok, History of the People of the Netherlands (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1900), III. Volume III of this five volume set gives extensive coverage of the situation in the Netherlands from 1555 through 1621.

Attempts to unite the Protestant north and the Catholic south were doomed to failure. The northern states formed the United Provinces led by William of Orange and announced themselves an independent republic. William was assassinated in 1584 at the age of fifty-one, Phillip having placed a price on his head. Not until 1609 did the hostilities cease and the United Netherlands gain their freedom. It was this political peace which opened the door to the Separatists and Puritans who were beginning to find life in England intolerable.

When the political fighting had ended, a momentous struggle over doctrine broke out within the Dutch Reformed Church. Calvinist theologians were divided on the doctrines of "supralapsarianism" and "infralapsarianism." The former declared that God had decreed who should be saved and who should be lost (prior to the creation of the world) and the latter believed that the decision was made after the creation of the world.

A group known as the Remonstrants disagreed with both views. Jacob Arminius was their chief figure.⁵ He was a pupil of Theodore de

⁵Jacob Arminius, 1560-1609, was a reformed Dutch theologian and author of the theology which bears his name. He held a professorship at the University of Leiden from 1603-1609. He advocated the view that salvation is available to all who believe and repent. Arminius entered the controversy with the greatest reluctance. He deeply regretted the nature of the theological education of his day which tended to involve the students in the questions of the schoolmen rather than the devoted study of the scriptures. This concern and his unorthodox views on predestination brought down a storm of criticism which he endured with remarkable equanimity. Arminius sickened and died on October 19, 1609. His successors followed his leading and structured his thoughts into the system presently designated "Arminianism." James Arminius, The Works of James Arminius, trans. James Nichols (Auburn: Derby, Miller and Orton, 1853), I, 9-15. Cf. Peter Bertius, The Life

Beze,⁶ and a professor of theology at the University of Leiden.

Arminius had originally offered to refute the errors of the Remonstrant position, but in the process came to embrace their views as his own, and eventually gave his own name to the doctrine that Christ died for all men, that salvation is by faith alone, that those who believe are saved, that those who choose to refuse God's grace are lost, and that God does not predestine individuals. The Remonstrants were mainly from the more wealthy classes and were staunch supporters of states rights. Their opponents were nationalists and therefore looked to a National Synod to deal with the issue.

The Contra-Remonstrants were quick to see danger in any rift with the Protestant forces. Their concern rested on the fact that the total Protestant population constituted only about one-third of the

and Death of James Arminius (London: Thomas Ratcliff, 1672); Blok, *op. cit.*, III, 400-403; Simon Episcopius, The Popish Labyrinth (London: J. K., 1673), pp. 1-34.

⁶Theodore de Beze, 1519-1605, was a French theologian with considerable facility in the use of Biblical languages. He taught at the Geneva Academy and later became John Calvin's biographer and administrative assistant and ultimately his successor. He is best known for his famous "Codex B" which he presented to Cambridge in 1581. Though an active reformer, Beze revealed an uncommon tolerance and humanitarian concern. When the King of Navarre applauded the massacre of a group of Protestants who were worshipping in a barn at Vassy, Beze replied, "Sire, it is in truth the lot of the church of God, in whose name I am speaking, to endure blows, and not to strike them. But also may it please you to remember that it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers." Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), VII, 846-871. Beze prepared a tract entitled A brief declaration of the chiefe poyntes of Christian Religion (London, 1572). The subject is the doctrine of predestination. Frederic Gardy has prepared a bibliography of Beze; Frederic Gardy, Bibliographie des Oeuvres Theologiques Litteraires Historiques et Juridiques de Theodore de Beze (Geneva: Libraire E. Drog, 1960).

citizens of the Netherlands. Catholic Spain constituted a continual threat, particularly to a divided Netherlands.⁷

The points of concern between the rival Dutch factions were discussed with extraordinary passion in the towns and universities of Holland. Political feeling reinforced religious zeal. Leiden became the storm center in the bitter disputes which followed.⁸ The School of Divinity at the University of Leiden was the focus of concern. The professors lectured as much to one another as to the students. The students took sides as did the faithful throughout the country. The question of "Free-will" versus "Predestination" drew a line of distinction between Protestants not unlike that which had traditionally divided Catholics and Protestants.⁹

In 1609, the year the Separatists arrived in Leiden, Arminius died. In July of 1610, the curators of the University elected Conrad Vorstius to succeed him.¹⁰ Francis Gomarus, the incumbent Contra-

⁷Cf. Cambridge Modern History, III, 653; and Blok, op. cit., p. 415.

⁸Edward Arber discusses the situation in Leyden at some length in his chapter on Leyden. Edward Arber, The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers (London: Ward and Downey, 1897), pp. 143-247.

⁹Herbert Darling Foster, "Liberal Calvinism; the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort in 1618," Harvard Theological Review, XVI (1923), 1-37. Foster argues that both Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants must be considered loyal Calvinists. Both adhered to the essential doctrines of Calvinism. The Remonstrants were liberal and progressive; their opposition might be considered conservative, scholastic, and rigid by comparison. He also notes a wide divergence between the Calvinism of Calvin and the Calvinism of the latter part of the 16th and early 17 century.

¹⁰Conrad Vorstius, 1569-1614, was appointed to the chair of theology vacated by Arminius. He was a staunch Arminian and aroused

Remonstrant professor, resigned in protest against the appointment of Vorstius.¹¹ King James I was also angered by the appointment of Vorstius and prepared a Declaration against Vorstius in answer to the latter's Tractatus Theologicus de Deo.¹²

James ordered Vorstius' book burned at St. Paul's Cross, Oxford and Cambridge. He apparently would have preferred to burn the author for he stated, "Never any heretic better deserved to be burnt."¹³ He then brought pressure to bear on the States of Holland through his ambassador, Sir Ralph Winwood, to prevent the preferment of Vorstius. He also wrote a letter to the States General, exhorting them not to admit such a man into the important office of teacher of theology. James believed Vorstius should be banned rather than loaded with public honors:

And (as God hath honoured us with the Title of "Defender of the Faith") not only to depart and separate ourselves from the union of such false and heretical churches, but also to exhort all other

considerable criticism. He was appointed in 1610 and removed in 1611 to calm the storm of criticism heaped upon him and the university. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1912), XII, 227. Cf. A. W. Harrison, The Beginnings of Arminianism (London: University of London Press, 1926), pp. 165-189, "Conrad Vorstius and Leiden University."

¹¹Johannes Polyander assumed the chair of theology vacated by Gomarus.

¹²James I, A Declaration Concerning the Proceedings with the States General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries, in the Cause of D. Conradius Vorstius (London: 1612). This appeared in English, Latin, and French in 1612. Cf. James I, The Workes of the Most High and Mighty Prince, James (London: Robert Barker and John Bill, 1616), pp. 389-391; Conrad Vorstius, Tractatus theologicus de Deo sive de natura et attributis Dei (Steinfurt: 1610).

¹³James I, A Declaration . . ., p. 20.

reformed churches to join with us in a common council, how to extinguish and remand back to hell these abominable Heresies that now newly begin to put forth again. And furthermore for our own particular, we shall be enforced strictly to inhibit the youth of our Dominions for repairing to so infected a place, as the University of Leyden.¹⁴

When the pressure from England forced the removal of Vorstius, Episcopius, a leading man of the Remonstrant party, was elected.¹⁵

¹⁴James I, Workes, p. 356. Christopher Hill states:

"No one, I believe, has so far properly investigated the extent to which Englishmen dissatisfied with Oxford and Cambridge sent their sons to Leiden University, or what Leiden's influence on English thought was. The first student in Leiden's Faculty of Medicine, and the first English graduate of the university, was John James, Leicester's physician. Later students included Geoffrey Whitney the poet, John Robinson, John Burges, Sir William Paddy, Dury, Haak, Ames, Petty, William Bridge, Francis Rous, Theodore Diodati, John Bastiwick, Robert Child, Sir Thomas Browne, Samuel Collins. Leiden soon came to share first place with Padua as a centre for students wanting a more modern medical education than they could get in England. Astronomy, botany, and chemistry were also better taught there than anywhere in Great BritainBetween 1575 and 1600 110 Englishmen matriculated at Leiden; 105 between 1600 and 1619; 95 in the ensuing decade, 145 between 1630 and 1639 and 300 in the decade of civil war. After the purge of Oxford and Cambridge the number fell sharply to 70 between 1650 and 1659, rising again to 85 in the decade after the Restoration."

Christopher Hill, Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 283, 284.

¹⁵Simon Episcopius, 1583-1643, succeeded Vorstius in the chair of theology previously occupied by Jacob Arminius. Though a Remonstrant there was little that could be urged against him personally and his appointment met with no serious objection. He formulated the theological opinions of Arminius into a coherent system and hoped to give them positive utterance at the Synod of Dort. Dialogue was not a feature of the Synod and Episcopius, along with a number of Remonstrant ministers, was forced to leave the country. He protested against the tendency of the Calvinists to formalize religion and stress abstract dogma. He argued that Christianity was not a system of belief but a moral power. "A Short and Compendious History of Simon Episcopius," in Episcopius, op. cit., pp. 1-28. Cf. Blok, op. cit., III, 417-418.

It became increasingly evident that the Remonstrants could count on the friendship of a number of government officials. These individuals resisted attempts to bring the issue to a climax and sought to procrastinate in order that their position might be strengthened before the conflict came. In spite of their precautions, conditions worsened. Theological debates and uncertainty ensued. Pastors were suspended and driven from the charges for allowing those of Arminian views to remain in their congregations.

James I attempted to bring the strong arm of the state to the support of the opinions he valued. He had been reared in Scotland and educated by George Buchanan in the teachings of Presbyterianism. He came to England at a time when the majority of the men occupying pulpits were Calvinistic in outlook. Archibald Harrison describes James as "Puritan in theology, but prelatical in church order."¹⁶ Thus, when the Holland States Party compared the Remonstrants with the English Puritans they enlisted his full support for he believed the polity of Puritanism to be contrary to the best interest of monarchy.¹⁷

After the controversy over Vorstius, James devoted considerable concern to the question of Arminianism and how it might be controlled. As he pursued the matter he was frequently overcome with a vindictive hatred of the Dutch Arminians. He had hounded Vorstius to ruin when the question of his preferment was an issue and now he turned in a

¹⁶Harrison, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁷Pieter Geyl, The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961), p. 62.

similar manner to another Dutchman, Taurinius.¹⁸ When an English Divine, Edward Simpson, 1578-1651, advocated Arminian views in a sermon at court, the king exploded with anger and was not appeased until Simpson renounced his opinions.¹⁹

In 1610 the Netherlands looked to James to quiet the dispute which racked their country, but he meddled, lectured insufferably and finally suggested that all discussion be silenced.²⁰ He stated that he had studied the subject exhaustively and regarded his own opinion as the best of any. He concluded that nothing certain could be said concerning the doctrine.²¹

After the revolution in Holland in 1617, James changed his mind and advised a synod. He suggested to Prince Maurice that the Arminians should be summoned to a conference similar to the one held at Hampton Court.²² The King had forgotten that the Hampton Court Conference had

¹⁸Taurinius was a Remonstrant pastor of whom little can be known. Blok, op. cit., includes him in his discussion of pastors with Arminian leanings, pp. 409, 419, and 449. Taurinius wrote a tract against James' Ambassador to Holland, Sir Dudley Carleton: Taurinius, Balance Pour Peser en toute equite & droicture la Harangue du . . . Monseigneur Dudley Carleton (1618).

¹⁹Edward Simpson was a chaplain and rector in Kent. Scattered references to his activities may be found in the following sources: Alexander Chalmers, The General Biographical Dictionary (London: J. Nichols & Son, 1816), XXVIII, 12; John Chamberlain, "Letters," American Philosophical Society (1939), XII: 2, 121, 140; Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1611-1618, Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longman's & Roberts, 1858), XCIV: 74, December 20, 1617, p. 504.

²⁰Harrison, op. cit., p. 52.

²¹Ibid., p. 200.

²²Maurice of Orange, Prince of Nassau, 1567-1625, the younger

been no great success. Maurice had also considered a synod and instructed the States General to order a national synod to convene at Dort in November of 1618. Provincial synods were to be held in each of the six provinces to elect six delegates, four clergymen and two ruling elders together with a professor from the university.²³

King James did not contend for Calvinism so much out of judgment as for reasons of state and his personal friendship to Prince Maurice who had put himself at the head of the disputants. He therefore sent five divines who had sufficient zeal to condemn the Remonstrants though it is well known that he was not in complete agreement with the doctrine of Predestination.²⁴

Maurice planned to limit delegates to the members of the Belgic churches, but at the pointed request of James I, eminent divines from foreign churches were invited to sit and vote at the synod. Letters were sent to the King of Great Britain, the electors of the Palatine, to Brandenburg, to the Landgrave of Hesse, to the four Protestant cantons of Switzerland, to the republics of Geneva, Bremen, and Emden, and to the deputies of the reformed churches in France. Slightly prior

son of William the Silent was made governor of the United Provinces after the assassination of his father in 1584. He succeeded his brother as Prince of Orange in 1618. Cf. Calendar of State Papers Domestic, XCIV: 76, December 22, 1617, p. 504.

²³Geyl, op. cit., offers a chapter on the Synod of Dort, pp. 70-83; as does Renier, op. cit., pp. 41-49.

²⁴For a discussion on the relationship of James I and the Presbyterians prior to the Synod of Dort see Peter Heylin, The History of the Presbyterians (London: Robert Battersby, 1672), pp. 337-394.

to the departure of the French divines, the King of France, Louis XIII, forbade their attendance at the synod.²⁵

A day of fasting and prayer imploring the gracious presence of God preceded the synod. On November 13, 1618, the assembly opened. It consisted of thirty-three pastors, eighteen ruling elders, five professors from the universities of Holland and nineteen delegates from the reformed churches. Great Britain sent four delegates: George Carleton, Bishop of Llandaff; Joseph Hall, Dean of Worcester and afterwards Bishop successively of Exeter and Norwich (Hall was ultimately replaced by Dr. Thomas Goad, Prebendary of Canterbury); John Davenport, Professor of Divinity in the university of Cambridge; and Walter Balcanquhall, who represented the established church of North Britain.²⁶ A delegate from the province of Utrecht was the only Arminian seated.

The King of England had no official standing at the synod but he seems to have been fond of meddling in its affairs. He succeeded in persuading Maurice to invite delegates who were willing to accede to his wishes. From their comments and reactions following the synod it is apparent that the effect of the conference on them was greater than their influence over it.

Men of greater talent and ability could not have been found. They deliberated with the Dutch for months. They preached in Reformed

²⁵Thomas Scott, The Articles of the Synod of Dort (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1856), p. 165.

²⁶Chamberlain, op. cit., XII, 2, 169. Cf. Harrison, op. cit., p. 301. The Judgment of the Synod of Dort (London: John Bill, 1619), p. 75. This is also reprinted in "The Boston Gazette and Weekly Journal" (Boston: Kneeland & Green, 1745), December 3, 1745.

churches and united in their devotions. They recognized Presbyterian churches as true churches and their ministers as fellow ministers. When Bishop Hall took leave of the synod because of ill health he expressed his sincere regrets and warm regards for the members of the synod in an affectionate letter of farewell.²⁷ Earlier he had addressed the synod in the same sweet spirit:

But our King, our most serene King James, in whose name the whole Church of God appears to me to exult; the wisest King that the sun ever saw, except the heaven-taught Solomon; has, in his golden Letter, recommended these illustrious States, and has commanded us, to strive with all our force, and exclusively to inculcate, that you should all adhere to the belief which has hitherto been received, and to the confession which you hold in common with the other Churches. Which if you will do, O happy Holland! O immaculate spouse of Christ! O most flourishing republic! Then at length this Church, which has been tossed about on the waves of jarring opinions, will sail into harbour, and will in safety smile at and despise the storms which are stirred up by the evil one. But in order that this may at length be the case, study to be quiet; I Thess. 4:11. We are brethren, let us also be colleagues. What have we to do with the disgraceful titles of Remonstrants, Contra-Remonstrants, Calvinists, or Arminians? We are Christians, let us also be like-minded. We are one body, let us be also of one spirit. By that awful name of Almighty God, by the affectionate and gentle bosom of our common mother, by your own souls, and by the most holy bowels of our Saviour Jesus Christ, seek peace, brethren, enter into peace: and so compose yourselves, that, setting aside all prejudice, and party feeling, and bad passion, we may all happily be joined in promoting the same peace.²⁸

The peaceful intent with which the Synod of Dort opened may be further demonstrated by the oath to which the members of the assembly pledged themselves:

²⁷Geerandt Brandt, Historie der Reformatorie (Amsterdam: Voor Jan Rieuwertsz, 1674), III, 398.

²⁸Joseph Hall, The Works of Joseph Hall (Oxford: D. A. Talboys, 1839), XI, 485.

I promise before God, in whom I believe, and whom I worship, as being present in this place, and as being the searcher of all hearts, that during the course of the proceedings of this Synod, which will examine and decide, not only the five points, and all the differences resulting from them, but also any other doctrine, I will use no human writing, but only the word of God, which is an infallible rule of faith. And during all these discussions, I will aim only at the glory of God, the peace of the church, and especially the preservation of the purity of doctrine. So help me, my Saviour Jesus Christ! I beseech him to assist me by his Holy Spirit!²⁹

The Remonstrants were not allowed to make an appearance until the twenty-second session. At that time Episcopius and his twelve colleagues were summoned to make their defense. Episcopius, their spokesman, asked that he might begin with a refutation of the Calvinist doctrine, especially that of reprobation. He hoped that the voicing of his objections would secure popular support for his position and that he might at the same time cast doubt on the other doctrines.³⁰ The Synod reminded him that it was not the doctrines of the reformed church that were being called into question. Arminianism was the subject under discussion and its proponents were to provide scriptural proof for their positions. The Remonstrants refused this plan and were

²⁹Scott, op. cit., p. 27. Cf. John Hales, Golden Remains, (London: 1659), p. 40.

³⁰John Hales went to Holland in 1616 to serve as chaplain to Dudley Carleton, James I's Ambassador to the Hague. Carleton dispatched Hales to Dort in 1618 to report the proceedings of the synod. From November through February Hales kept up a stream of reports not lacking in wit and insight. His editor, Anthony Farindon, reports that Hales was led to "bid John Calvin good-night" when Episcopius pressed John 3:16 in support of his views. Hales, op. cit. See the preface to the reader by Farindon. Cf. Nancy E. Scott, "The Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales," Harvard Theological Review, X (1917), 245-271. This article tells the story of John Hales and reveals the origin of his familiar epithet, "The Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales." Cf. Episcopius, op. cit., p. 28.

therefore shut off from the remainder of the Synod. They were reasoned with individually, but the Synod proceeded without them.

The Synod examined the Arminian tenets, condemned them as unscriptural, pestilential errors and pronounced those who held them and their followers to be the enemies of the Belgic churches and corrupters of true religion. They disposed of the Arminian ministers and excluded them from the communion of the church, suppressed their religious assemblies and finally banished many of their clergymen. A number of sympathetic statesmen also felt the heel of the persecuting state.³¹

³¹Geyl, op. cit., pp. 70-83. Doubtless the most heinous atrocity of the Contra-Remonstrants was the assassination of John of Barneveldt. Barneveldt had served the cause of independence in the Netherlands for forty years, but his occasional opposition to Maurice and his espousal of the tenets of religious toleration marked him for destruction at the zenith of his career. He was arrested on August 29, 1618, came to trial on February 20, 1619 and appeared before his judges over sixty times. He was finally condemned and executed on May 12, 1619, shortly following the termination of the Synod of Dort. John Lothrop Motley is Barneveldt's major biographer in his three volume series. John L. Motley, The Complete Works of John L. Motley (New York: Society of English and French Literature, 1902), XII, XIII, XIV. A more concise presentation of the life of John Barneveldt may be found in the Cambridge Modern History. This source records Barneveldt's closing statement as he awaits the executioner, "Men, do not believe that I am a traitor to the country. I have always served it uprightly as a good patriot, and as such I shall die." Cambridge Modern History, III, 645. Also of interest is Voltaire's "Travels of Scarmentado." It is a tale of a wanderer who visited Rome, France, England and finally Holland in quest of truth, but who finds nothing but foolish quarreling and ugly violence. Arriving in Holland, he records the following scene:

"Just as I arrived at the Hague the people were cutting off the head of a venerable old man. It was the bald head of the prime minister, Barneveldt--a man who deserved better treatment from the republic. Touched with pity at this affecting scene, I asked what was his crime, and whether he had betrayed the state.

"'He has done much worse,' replied a preacher in a black cloak; 'he believed that men may be saved by good works as well as by faith.

The Synod culminated in 1619 with the statement of five general articles relative to the points in question. They are summarized as follows:

1) That God by an absolute decree, hath elected to salvation a very small number of men, without any regard to their faith and obedience whatsoever; and secluded from saving grace all the rest of mankind, and appointed them by the same decree to eternal damnation, without any regard to their infidelity and impenitency.

2) That Jesus Christ hath not suffered death, but for those elect only: having neither any intent nor commandment from the Father, to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

3) That by Adam's fall his posterity lost their free will, being put to an unavoidable necessity to do, or not to do, whatsoever they do or do not, whether it be good or evil; being thereunto predestined by the eternal and effectual secret decree of God.

4) That God to save the elect from the corrupt mass, doth beget faith in them, by a power equal to that whereby he created the world and raised up the dead: insomuch, that such unto whom he gives grace cannot reject, and the rest, being reprobate, cannot accept it.

5) That such as have once received that grace by faith, can never fall from it finally or totally, notwithstanding the most enormous sins they can commit.³²

You must perceive,' adds he, 'that if such opinions were to gain ground, a republic could not subsist, and that there must be severe laws to suppress such scandalous and horrid blasphemies.'

"A profound politician said to me with a sigh: 'Alas! sir, this happy time will not last long; it is only by chance that the people are so zealous. They are naturally inclined to the abominable doctrine of toleration, and they will certainly at last grant it.' This reflection set him a-groaning.

"For my own part, in expectation of that fatal period when moderation and indulgence should take place, I instantly quitted a country where severity was not softened by any lenitive, and embarked for Spain."

Voltaire, The Works of Voltaire (New York: Dingwall-Rock, 1927), II, 54.

³²Scott, op. cit., pp. 190, 201, 214, 226. For an extensive

The Anglo-Catholic clergy in the Church of England, who opposed predestination and sympathized to some extent with the Arminian views, appeared to have suffered a heavy blow. They dared not object to what had been done. Bishop Carleton, on returning from the Synod, found some murmuring in corners. Though generally, "His majesties judgment puts all adversaries to silence and nothing is heard but approbation of those things which his majesty approves."³³

Arminianism recovered quickly in the English church.³⁴ Among the upper clergy, sympathy for Arminian doctrines gained considerable ground. Joseph Hall returned from Dort with new appreciation for the Arminian cause. Time has revealed that the party of Arminians in both Holland and England was the party of change. They struggled with the authority of Calvinism which was an inspiration of the sixteenth century, a tradition in the seventeenth century, and only a prejudice in

statement of the Articles as agreed upon by the Synod see The Judgment of the Synod of Dort.

³³Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1619-1623, CIV: 144, July 20, 1619, p. 64.

³⁴According to Mosheim:

"But scarcely had the British divines returned from the synod of Dort, and given an account of the laws that had been enacted, and the doctrines that had been established by that famous assembly, than the king, together with the greatest part of the Episcopal clergy, discovered in the strongest terms, their dislike of these proceedings, and judged the sentiments of Arminius, relating to the divine degrees, preferable to Francis Gomarus and John Calvin."

John Lawrence Mosheim, An Ecclesiastical History Ancient and Modern (New York: Evert Duyckinck, Collins and Hamroy, Collins and Company, 1824), IV, 93.

the eighteenth century.³⁵ In 1621 William Laud, an Arminian sympathizer, was elected Bishop of St. Davids. It was an appointment which James approved only reluctantly. His approval was accompanied by the following warning:

I find that he hath a restless spirit and cannot see when matters are well, but loves to toss and change and to bring matters to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain. Take him to you, but on my soul you will repent it.³⁶

The questions of predestination, election, and reprobation were by no means new to John Robinson. These issues were debated hotly at Cambridge and not without affecting his own thinking on the matters. He was unmoved by the wave of Arminianism which now began to set in. He held to the general scheme of theology in which he had been instructed, for it seemed to have adequate scriptural foundation.³⁷

The questions debated at Cambridge during his student days and those which gripped Leiden upon the arrival of the Pilgrim church in that city bore a remarkable resemblance. Here, as before, the religious questions were complicated by the underlying political implications. In 1615, Robinson entered the Leiden university and involved

³⁵Figgis, op. cit., p. 239. Cf. Mosheim, op. cit., IV, 93-95.

³⁶John Hacket, A Memorial Offered to the Great Deservings of John Williams, D. D. (Savoy: Edward Jones for Samuel Lowndes, 1692), Part I, pp. 63-64. E. R. Adair, "Laud and the Church of England," Church History (1936), 121-140. Mr. Adair presents evidence which tends to weaken the arguments concerning Laud's Arminian leanings and represents him as a loyal supporter of the Anglican Church.

³⁷The theological patterns prevalent at Cambridge in the years of John Robinson's student days 1592-1598 are discussed in H. C. Porter, Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958). Of particular interest is Part III, "The Universe of Grace," pp. 277-430.

himself in the controversies. Edward Winslow, later recalled the occasion in his Hypocrisy Unmasked:

Our Pastor, Master Robinson, in the time when Arminianism prevailed so much, at the request of the most orthodox Divines, as Polyander, Festus, Hommius, etc., disputed daily at the academy at Leyden against Episcopius and others the grand champion of that error; and has as good respect amongst them as any of their own Divines.³⁸

William Bradford gives a more complete account in his Of Plymouth Plantation:

In these times also were the great troubles raised by the Arminians, who, as they greatly molested the whole state, so this city in particular in which was the chief university; so as there were daily hot disputes in the schools thereabout. And as the students and other learned were divided in their opinions herein, so were the two professors or divinity readers themselves, the one daily teaching for it, the other against it. Which grew to that pass, that few of the disciples of one would hear the other teach. But Mr. Robinson, though he taught thrice a week himself, and wrote sundry books besides his manifold pains otherwise, yet he went constantly to hear their readings and heard the one as well as the other; by which means he was so well grounded in the controversy and saw the force of all their arguments and knew the shifts of the adversary. And being himself very able, none was fitter to buckle with them than himself, as appeared by sundry disputes, so as he began to be terrible to the Arminians. Which made Episcopius to put forth his best strength and set forth sundry theses which by public dispute he would defend against all men.

Now Polyander, the other professor, and the chief preacher of the city, desired Mr. Robinson to dispute against him; but he was loath, being a stranger. Yet the other did importune him and told him that such was the ability and nimbleness of the adversary that the truth would suffer if he did not help them. So as he condescended and prepared himself against the time; and when the day came, the Lord did so help him to defend the truth and foil his adversary as he put him to an apparent nonplus in this great and public audience. And the like he did a second or third time upon such like occasions. The which as it caused many to praise God that the truth had so famous victory, so it procured him much

³⁸Edward Winslow, Hypocrisy Unmasked (London: 1646), p. 94.

honour and respect from those learned men and other which loved the truth.³⁹

The debates forced John Robinson to express his theological convictions in a definite system of formal statements. Thus he became not only a defender of the Separatist form of church government, but he also championed a system of theology. Two of his works were devoted to statements of theology. The first was his treatise on Religious Communion, Private and Public.⁴⁰ The second is his reply to John Murton's A Description of What God Hath Predestinated Concerning Man in His Creation, Transgression, and Redemption.⁴¹ It is entitled, A Defense of the Doctrine Propounded by the Synod of Dort, Against John Murton and His Associates.⁴²

Although a span of ten years separates these two works, no significant change in thinking is indicated. The struggle between

³⁹William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), pp. 20-21.

⁴⁰John Robinson, On Religious Communion, Private & Publique (Leyden: 1614).

⁴¹John Murton, A Description of What God Hath Predestinated Concerning Man in His Creation, Transgression, and Redemption (1620). This work is rare and of uncertain authorship. John Robinson attributes it to John Murton of whom little can be known. The Short Title Catalogue, edited by Pollard and Redgrave (London: Bibliographical Society, 1956), lists it by its title rather than by author and spells it "Discription." Henry Ainsworth wrote A Censure Upon a Dialogue of the Anabaptist, Intituled, a Description of What God Hath Predestinated Concerning Man (1623). W. T. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography (London: The Kingsgate Press, 1916), I, 8, names John Murton the author and indicates that the work is a response to John Robinson. Whitley also spells it "Discription."

⁴²John Robinson, A Defense of the Doctrine Propounded by the Synode of Dort, Against John Murton and His Associates (Leiden: 1624).

Robinson and his opponents was over the idea of God's absolute sovereignty and the complete freedom of the will. It was the conflict between high Calvinism and protesting Arminianism. It was not a struggle between mere opinions in speculative theology. It was a war between religious dogmas involving political parties and the destiny of the state.

We shall accept the judgment of the Synod of Dort as to what constituted the most significant doctrines and important theological questions being asked in that time. We will present the teaching of John Robinson in these areas and compare them briefly with the dominant themes presented by his contemporaries and predecessors.

A notable characteristic of all of Robinson's theological writing is his loyalty to the Puritan insistence that Scripture should be the foundation of all belief and practice. He emphatically states:

My judgment therein, and the reasons of it, I have set down in the first part of the book: unto which I bind no man further to assent, than he sees ground from the scriptures.⁴³

Edward Winslow recalled a portion of Robinson's farewell address to the departing Pilgrim Fathers. It included admonitions along similar lines revealing Robinson's fidelity to the authority and importance of Scripture as the norm of religious behavior:

. . . he charged us before God and his blessed angels, to follow him no further than he followed Christ. And that if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth

⁴³John Robinson, The Works of John Robinson, edited by Robert Ashton (London: John Snow, 1851), III, 102.

by his ministry: For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light to break forth out of his holy Word.⁴⁴

In the address, Robinson reminded his hearers that God had given light to other reformed churches, to the Lutherans and the Calvinists, but that they had refused to go beyond Luther and Calvin and therefore failed to continue in the pathway of truth that their originators had blazed. Winslow recalled further:

Here also he put us in mind of our church government (at least that part of it) whereby we promise and covenant with God and with one another, to receive whatsoever light of truth shall be made known unto us from his written Word; but withall exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, before we received it; for saith he, it is not possible that the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick antichristian darknesse, and that full perfection of knowledge should breake forth at once.⁴⁵

Robinson based his theology on the scriptures and its strength was to be found in its fidelity to them. Human reason was not a tool

⁴⁴Winslow, op. cit., pp. 97.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 98. The farewell sermon is Robinson's most widely known contribution to the departing Pilgrims. However, questions regarding its authenticity have frequently been raised. The sermon is in keeping with the character of Robinson and no doubt reflects the sentiments with which he challenged his anxious congregation. For a further discussion compare the following sources: The Dictionary of National Biography (New York: Macmillan, 1909), pp. 18-22; Champlin Burrage, New Facts Concerning John Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), p. 17, and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 239-241. Cf. William Wallace Fenn, "John Robinson's Farewell Address," Harvard Theological Review, XIII (1920), 236-251. Fenn declares that the Address is authentic at least in spirit and intent. He notes the progress of the Plymouth Colony and its remarkable freedom from strife and friction. He raises the question, "Did all this harmony proceed from the teaching of John Robinson alone?" His conjecture is that John Robinson was highly influenced by his layman William Brewster who was a man of the world as well as Elder of the Church. He predicts that the church of the future will be increasingly lay led for Christianity is a layman's religion--Jesus himself was a layman!

to be used in the formulation of one's attitude toward God. For Robinson, God was the infinite person beyond the comprehension of finite humanity:

The essence of God is known only to himself, but is undiscernible to all men, and angels: partly by reason of its infiniteness, which therefore no finite person can comprehend; and partly for that no voice, sign, or form can sufficiently express it either to sense or reason.⁴⁶

Robinson decried the attempt to bring God to a human level of understanding:

Some ambitious and curious wits, but not able, and no marvel, to raise up, and advance their notions to God's infiniteness, for the contemplating of it, have laboured to depress, and pull him down to their dwarfish conceptions of him; and have, indeed rather made him some great and giant-like man, or angel, that, as he is in truth, an infinite God; allowing him an essence, power and wisdom hugely great, but not properly infinite and immense: as though God could not be that, which they cannot conceive of him.⁴⁷

Robinson found God in the scriptures and considered himself dependent upon them for his views concerning Him. He did not feel at liberty to accept the idea of God and then divorce it from that which the scriptures revealed concerning Him. If Robinson had found a view of God which he could not comprehend, he would have considered it his responsibility to accept it and would have judged his reason faulty rather than the revelation:

But vain men are ready to deem God like themselves, imagining, that the things which please them, will please him as well . . . but if we will give God his due in religion, we must have him both for the object, and appointer of our worship.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Robinson, Works, III, 1, 2.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 31. Robinson's attitude toward the scriptures echoes the sentiments of John Calvin whose position is ably expounded in the chapter, "The Written Word as the Word of God," in Robert S.

Robinson's fundamental assumption, which was also the central issue of the Synod of Dort, dealt with the sovereignty of God. Both Robinson and the Synod's framers saw the doctrine of predestination as the proper expression for this concept.

I. PREDESTINATION

The sovereignty of the deity is the foundation of religion based on authority. For the Puritan, that authority was absolute and that God infinite. God was beyond the world and acted in an arbitrary manner, not from capriciousness, but from the honored position of His exalted being. The staunch reader of the Geneva Bible felt no need for any justification of the ways of God to man. God's will was revealed in history and in the Scriptures, the one making visible what God had chosen to accomplish and the other telling men that God was responsible for what they had observed. The Puritans attributed the "omni" virtues to God--Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience. Thus it was not out of harmony with Puritan thinking for Robinson to propose that:

God hath not only forseen and determined the issues and events of His works, but hath also decreed and purposed the works themselves before the foundation of the world.⁴⁹

While Robinson's description covers the essence of the doctrine, other Puritan sources spelled it out in even clearer terms. William Perkins,

Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1953), pp. 96-114.

⁴⁹Robinson, Works, I, 31.

a don at Christ's College Cambridge who had once been assailed by Arminius, offered a definition of predestination:

. . . it is a part of the counsell of God, whereby hee hath before all times purposed in himself to shew mercie on some men, and to passe by others, shewing his justice on them for the manifestation of the glory of his own name.⁵⁰

Perkins added that the decision determining the destiny of man was made in view of the glory of God and to that end.⁵¹ Robinson placed himself squarely in the camp of the Supralapsarians by stating that "the condemnation of wicked men by God for sin by their free-will to be wrought, was proposed by God before the world was created."⁵² It seemed only reasonable to conclude that an all-powerful God had ordained the events prior to their fulfillment. "God's full knowledge of the course of human history makes necessary his full determination of all that which he foresees!"⁵³

Robinson seeks to assert both the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and the free-will of man. He recognizes that the two doctrines

⁵⁰William Perkins, The Workes of That Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge (London: John Legatt, 1612), I, 278.

⁵¹Robinson, Works, I, 16.

⁵²Ibid., I, 279, 281.

⁵³Ibid., III, 239. Writing on the same subject, John Calvin wrote: "If God simply foresaw the fates of men, and did not also dispose and fix them by his determination, there would be room to agitate the question, whether his providence or foresight rendered them at all necessary. But since he forsees future events only in consequence of his decree about foreknowledge, while it is evident that all things come to pass rather by ordination and decree." John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), III, xxiii, 6. A more complete statement by

appear intellectually incompatible. Nevertheless, he attempts to reconcile them in the following manner:

If any demand how this can be, that God who forbiddeth and hateth sin, yet should so order persons and things by his providence, and so from eternity purpose to order them, as that the same cannot be, I answer, by free acknowledgement that the manner of God's working herein is to me and to all men inconceivable.⁵⁴

The modern mind is poorly satisfied with such an explanation. It appears that Robinson is accepting a popular position which he endorsed earlier and is now reluctant to terminate a cherished idea. He attempted to ignore the incoming tide of Arminianism by assuming that authority rather than spirit constituted the life of the church. In the preface to Of Religious Communion he spoke against the weakness of a merely traditional faith:

Others there are, also, who, whatsoever they boast of the Scriptures, have for the most part a traditional faith and religion; and, as Naaman, the Syrian, would not believe that there could be any better waters than the rivers of Damascus, so neither do they think it possible that there should be any purer manner of worshipping God, than that to which they have always been used; unto which they are so superstitiously addicted, as that they are ready to think it an heretical way for any man to step out of the beaten trod of their teacher's traditionary religion.⁵⁵

Though the activities of God may be somewhat inconceivable, Robinson attempts an explanation:

This knowledge, or foreknowledge of God, is two-fold: natural and indefinite, by which God knows all possible things, and whatsoever in any respect, or upon any supposition, can possibly be: or definite and indeterminate, by which of things possible he knows

John Calvin appears in the "Geneva Codex," a portion of which is included in the appendix.

⁵⁴Robinson, Works, I, 274, 275.

⁵⁵Ibid., III, 98.

what shall and what shall not be. Now however this foreknowledge, as all other things in God, be one, and that infinite and eternal; yet in our conception, the former of those acts of God's foreknowledge, goes before the decree, the latter presupposeth it. For therefore God certainly and infallibly foresees a thing shall be in and according to its kind: if good, by his working it: if evil, by his suffering it.⁵⁶

We see the attempt to remove from God the responsibility of having determined that evil should exist. Such an act would make Him the ultimate author of sin. This charge was leveled against the Calvinist position at the Synod of Dort and by other antagonists. The moral judgment that God is good was acceptable, but the impossibility of His having any evil attributes depreciated the significance of that judgment.

Article One of the Synod of Dort proposed that in Adam's sin all humanity became guilty and therefore subject to punishment:

Forasmuch as all men have sinned in Adam, and have become guiltie of the curse and eternal death, God had done wrong unto no man, if it had pleased him to leave all mankind in sin and under the curse, and to condemn them for sin; according to those words of the apostle, "All the world is guilty before God," Romans 3:19. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," verse 23. And, "The wages of sin is death," Romans 3:23.⁵⁷

The Remonstrants accused the Calvinists of making God evil for punishing those who had no alternative for their evil actions. In the Remonstrant attempts to make God acceptable to contemporary morality we see the effort to make God conform to the highest conceivable level of personality. The Calvinists accorded God a position beyond human

⁵⁶Ibid., I, 279.

⁵⁷The Judgment of the Synod of Dort, p. 1.

reason and only with the greatest reluctance did they seek to correlate reason and revelation.

The distinction between "fore-knowledge" and "predestination" is at best a tenuous one. To the Calvinist, however, all theology centered around the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. It took as its premise the supposition that God's sovereignty and man's sin removed God's acts from the arena of mortal moral judgments. Yet Robinson lived in the age of the emergence of humanism which he could not suppress. He endeavoured to weave a tapestry which would combine the warp of God's sovereignty and the woof of man's free-will:

I affirm then, that God's decree, and ordination about Adam's fall was such, as that the same could not but follow thereupon; not as an effect, upon a cause working it; God forbid! but as a consequent upon an antecedent; or as an event necessarily following upon a most holy, wise, and powerful providence, so ordering and disposing, that the same should so come to pass infallibly, though performed by Adam's free, and freely working will.⁵⁸

Robinson further proposed that if it were God's wish, He might by His power so decree that He could both know and predetermine what would occur. The individual will then act in accordance with God's will, not predetermined, but because he himself has chosen to do so by

⁵⁸Robinson, Works, I, 274. Theology in its narrow sense is an interpretation of God. In its broader application, it is an interpretation of the universe. It is an attempt to tie events together and give an orderliness and meaning to what might otherwise be only chaos. Calvinism interpreted the world with God as its center. The consistency of that interpretation was more important than the pleasantness of its parts. God's predestinatory activities were indissolubly linked with His sovereignty and justice rather than His mercy. Thus God could offer mercy to those whom He chose to redeem but laboured under no obligation to extend it indiscriminately. Robinson's teaching in this area bears strong resemblance to opinions as expressed in Calvin, op. cit., III, xxi, 7.

his own free-will. He points out that failure to comprehend the workings of God is not unusual. Who can understand the workings of the Holy Spirit? How can we comprehend how the prophets were moved to write the Scriptures without error? Therefore, why should man need an explanation as to how God's glory can be manifested working in a sinful creature's actions?

In Acts 2:22,23 and 4:27,28, Robinson read that it was by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" that wicked hands were laid upon Jesus, and that Herod, Pontius Pilate and the people of Israel did "whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done." Robinson believed that the Holy Spirit could not have made use of more lively words to express His effectual work and His eternal purpose.⁵⁹ Robinson saw in these scriptural references evidences of God's thoughtful planning of events, even wicked events, and the involvement of the effectual instrument of His working--His mighty hand.

Robinson's theological probings were not disturbed by a foolish consistency. In a quotation offered earlier, he suggested that God worked the good and suffered the evil as if the action of God in one case was different from another. It is plain that God suffered the wicked to kill His son, but He suffered it because He had earlier decreed it. If He had not decreed it, they would not have done it. Therefore, even for God to suffer an action, is for Him to determine it:

⁵⁹Robinson, Works, I, 275.

To affirm that anything, great or small, good or evil, comes to pass in the world, without God's providence, ordering and governing it and them that do it, is to set the creature from under the creator's rule and dominion therein; and to shut God out of earth, whilst men do what they list in it, he letting them alone, and not meddling with them.⁶⁰

John Murton had asserted that for God to forbid sin and then decree that a person sin is as contrary as light and darkness.⁶¹ Robinson attempted to point out the fallacy of this argument by showing that Calvinists did not hold that God decreed Adam's sin; rather God decreed to leave Adam to himself in the temptation and not assist him with the grace that would have upheld him. Therefore Adam followed the dictates of his natural conscience and succumbed to his appetite for the pleasant but forbidden fruit. Thus his mind was beclouded by the false persuasions of Satan. It was not at all unusual for God to order a thing and then decree that it should not be. Abraham was ordered to take the life of Isaac, but God decreed that it should not be. Pharaoh was commanded to release the children of Israel but "the Lord hardened his heart." Christ desired to drink the cup for the salvation of man, yet in another respect he asked that the cup might be taken from him:

These things may well stand together in their several respects, and are not as light and darkness to any, but to them, whose light is darkness!⁶²

A man's will may appear to be good, but only the will of God is truly righteous. God does not will sin, though He may permit a thing

⁶⁰Ibid., I, 280.

⁶¹Murton, op. cit., pp. 28, 29.

⁶²Robinson, Works, I, 281.

which in the creature is sin. It may be a holy and wise trial for the person. It may be a punishment for past wickedness on his part or even someone else. (Absolom's sin was God's just punishment on David, II Samuel 12; 15; 16.)

God made Adam a reasonable creature. He gave him all that was necessary for the preservation of that state of holiness in which he had been created. His lack of grace was due to his own neglect. Therefore, he was unable to stand the temptations of the serpent brought to him by the woman. Since he did not depend upon God as he ought, God did not give him the measure of grace necessary to withstand sin:

Which was requisite in so great a temptation, by so subtle an adversary, in an object so pleasing to nature, and good in itself, together with the persuasion of his wife, so near unto him, this grace, I say, Adam received not of God.⁶³

Robinson believed that the end of Adam's creation in regard to himself was holiness and happiness; and in regard to God, it was for the glorious manifestation of His power, wisdom, and goodness. But sin entered by accident and misery by sin. Man willed the sin and God willed the punishment.

He later noted three levels of willing.⁶⁴ The first is indicated when God allows the natural results of an action to take their course. The second is when He commands a thing to be done and approves it when it is accomplished. The third is when He works with all His omnipotent power to accomplish a thing. He pointed out that this is

⁶³Ibid., I, 284.

⁶⁴Ibid., I, 289.

the way a mortal might act, suffering that which He might not approve, ordering that which He does not do, and accomplishing the purposes which seem to be necessary. God always acts as the circumstances require.

The Calvinists made a distinction between the action and the sin of the action. In their opinion, God was the author of the action, but not the sin of the action. Their opponents said they were going to put an end to such nonsense and call a spade a spade.⁶⁵ Robinson countered by stating that they demonstrated themselves to be more suited to working with a spade than with the Holy Scriptures.⁶⁶ He pointed out that Eve's act in taking the fruit, David's adultery and other commonly known sins may be taken in two ways. First, naturally, these were all actions in nature controlled by man's natural and created faculties. But in a moral sense the actions were misapplied, directed to wrong objects by man's corrupted will. Sin is not the natural act of the person, but the abuse of a natural act.

To the charge that such a concept made sin "nothing," Robinson replied that if God commanded something and a person failed to do it he would be guilty of doing nothing--but even that nothing is something because it represents a refusal to do God's will. He then taunts them by suggesting that they would be fit teachers of the goats at the left hand of Christ. Sin is more than an action, but:

So is sin only the absence and want of that conformity and

⁶⁵Murton, op. cit., p. 12.

⁶⁶Robinson, Works, I, 293.

agreeableness, which ought to be in the thought, word or work of the reasonable creature to the law of God.⁶⁷

Sin is not the act, but the nature of the heart, for only the things which come out of the heart can defile a man. The wicked man, even when he sleeps, though he does not act, is wicked. His wickedness is in his heart: "And what is his heart, but the faculties of his understanding, will and affections, which sin possesseth and corrupteth."⁶⁸

II. ELECTION

Robinson considered the concepts of predestination and election to be parallel doctrines, but his opponents treated them as distinct doctrines. He defined election as follows:

Election is the unchangeable purpose of God by which, before the foundations of the world were laid, out of all mankind, fallen from its primitive integrity into sin, and destruction, by its own fault, according to the most free good pleasure of his will, He out of his mere grace, hath chosen to salvation in Christ, a certain multitude of such as were neither better, nor more worthy than others, but lying in the common misery with others.⁶⁹

Calvinism declared that God had decreed that Jesus Christ would give to some "true faith" and at length bring them into everlasting fellowship with the Father.⁷⁰ The textual support for this teaching was found in Ephesians 1:4-6:

⁶⁷Ibid., I, 295.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., I, 310. William Perkins defined election in similar words: "Election is God's decree, whereby on his own free-will, he hath ordained certain men to salvation, to the praise of the glorie of his grace." Perkins, op. cit., I, 24.

⁷⁰Calvin stated: "Although it is now sufficiently clear that God

He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame in his sight, with love; having predestined us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will: to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in that beloved one.

The evangelical churches sought to base their confession on Scripture alone. They looked upon their opponents as pieces divided from the whole, whose teachings were sometimes altered in words, always perverted in thought and meaning, and were therefore, stumbling stones in their own pathway.

The central question in the doctrine of election concerns the goodness of God--why should a good God save only a few? If He has the power and the character attributed to Him, why should He not save all? The Arminians denied that the doctrine of predestination offered a true representation of God. They proposed that the majority of the population would have just reason to hate such a God. Who could tolerate a person who would exercise judgment when he might have effected redemption?

Robinson attempted to clarify his view with an illustration.⁷¹ A physician might enter an infirmary and heal a few of the patients, but offer no care to the vast majority of the inmates. No patient has any claim upon the physician. The physician can heal or ignore them

by his secret plan freely chooses whom he pleases, rejecting others, still his free election has been only half explained until we come to individual persons, to whom God not only offers salvation but so assigns it that the certainty of its effect is not in suspense or doubt." Calvin, op. cit., III, xxi, 7.

⁷¹Robinson, Works, I, 312.

at his own discretion. The physician alone has the right to determine who shall be healed, or who shall be left in misery.

John Murton attempted to modify the illustration to fit his particular theology.⁷² He proposed that a true physician would enter the infirmary and offer to heal whoever would receive the medicine, "Come unto me all that are heavy laden." The medicine might be bitter, the remedy painful, but if taken, healing would result. Those who rejected the physician's aid would thereby decide their own destiny. Those who accepted it, by complying with the conditions of recovery, fulfilled the requirements of their redemption.

Robinson replied that the call to the heavy laden was not a universal summons. Only a few of the world's population consider themselves heavy laden. Such a number might be compared as a handful to the rest.

He further denied that the distribution of the medicine was as simple as Murton assumed. God does more than merely provide the medicine, which is of course Christ and his benefits. He also, by the inward working of His Holy Spirit, makes effectual the outward means in opening the heart to attend to the things spoken. He enlightens the understanding to discern and assent to the true and the good. He bends the will and affections to like and love that which is noble.

The elect, whose salvation God truly desires, experience the effectual, irresistible work of God in their hearts to convert them. This work takes away their stony heart and gives them hearts of flesh.

⁷²Murton, op. cit., p. 34.

Robinson proposes a number of arguments to further highlight his view of the actual work of election:

1) To receive Christ and his grace, is to believe in him; this believing, or faith by which we are saved, is "the gift of God and not of ourselves." So as not only the medicine itself, and offer of it, but also the hand to receive it with, which is faith, and a believing heart, is God's gift.

2) What is it, then, that of the natural, makes the spiritual man, that can do these great things, the bare publishing and proclaiming of this spiritual and gracious medicine in and by Christ? Not so; for too many, alas! remain natural still, to whom the gospel of grace is very plentifully preached. What then? Is it his free-will to receive it, to whom it is preached? Not so, neither; for his will is but the will of a natural man, who neither doth, nor can discern and receive the things of God, till he becomes spiritual. It is then God's Holy Spirit, which he gives to one who hears the gospel, and not to another; which makes one hearer spiritual, and not another: thereby changing both the will, and the whole man of him to whom he gives it.

3) The Corinthians did too highly advance the ministers, by them facetiously adhered unto, as is evident; setting them in Christ's and God's place; showing, that except God add a further work than their preaching, how sound and excellent soever, all is nothing. But by these men's device, there need no further work of grace from God, than the gracious proclamation made by preaching, to be received by man's free-will: and so further God's work of giving the increase is quite shut out.

4) When the Jews, John 6:44, "murmured at Christ's words," he to stop their mouths, and to prevent his disciples offense taking, saith, that "no man cometh unto him, except the Father, which sent him, draw him." If any say, that God draws men to Christ by preaching of the Gospel, it is true, but not to the purpose of the place: for so the Jews were drawn that came not, as well as they came and believed. There is then requisite, "that men may come to Christ, or believe on him" verse 47, a further drawing than that, by the outward preaching only. Not that God draws men, as horses draw a cart, or by any violence, or compulsion against, or without their will; but he makes them by the inward work of his Spirit, joined with the outward word, of unwilling, willing; effectually driving away ignorance and rebellion, and so enlightening the mind, as to assent, and the will, to consent.

5) Lastly, these adversaries, suffering their merciful physician to go no further than the proclaiming and offering of the medicine of grace to the sick of sin, II Timothy 2:24, 25, do,

therein, make many despisers of all grace and goodness, so living and dying and perishing forever, more bound and beholden to God, and his grace. The reason is plain; for the many living and dying impenitent, have had the gospel in a far more full and plentiful manner and measure, published and preached unto them, with all other outward motives and provocations of grace, than many that truly believe and repent.⁷³

Robinson believed that the person who claimed to have accepted the salvation of the gospel by virtue of his own free-will and active mind, placed himself in a position more blasphemous than that occupied by the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men. That a man's habits differed from the known wicked was due to no good thing within him, but was totally the result of God's interaction in his life. No man may take the credit for any good in his own life.

The Arminians pointed to the wedding feast of Matthew 22:14 as an indication that the king willed that all should come to the banquet.⁷⁴

Robinson replied that after the initial invitation, God performed a further work. Only to such persons as hear the gospel preached and who actually accept the message, is this further work administered. God reveals to them his will and pleasure and shows them heavenly things. He opens their hearts to attend to the things spoken and gives them to believe and repent upon their hearing the gospel. Such work is God's election:

⁷³Robinson, Works, I, 314, 315, 316. Robinson's position seconded John Calvin: "Why, then, according to the Apostle, are the faithful crowned? Because by the mercy of the Lord, and not by their own industry, they are elected, and called, and justified." Calvin, op. cit., II, v, 2.

⁷⁴Murton, op. cit., pp. 36-43.

Election is God's work, not ours; for it is God that chooseth us, and not we ourselves; but the putting on of Christ by faith and obedience, is our work by God's grace, and not God's. God doth not believe and obey, but we by his grace.⁷⁵

Robinson interpreted the text, "Many are called, but few are chosen," by indicating several decrees of calling men to Christ. The first is when the gospel is preached. As in the case of the feast, many refused to answer this invitation and absented themselves from the feast by their own free choice. The second is indicated by those who reluctantly came to the feast. They refused to comply with the regulations concerning the proper attire and thus demonstrated that they came without faith and repentance. This third and last decree of calling, Robinson found in Romans 8:30: "Whom he predestinated, them also he called, them also he justified, them also he glorified."

The belief that God determined whom He would save before the foundations of the world were laid meant that God decreed to elect or choose His people, not because they were holy, but that they might be holy. Man plays no part in his own holiness. If he responds to God's will it is solely because God responded to his need and has given him the grace necessary to effect his salvation.

God's actual choosing, goes before man's faith, holiness, repentance and obedience, as the cause rather than as the effect:

⁷⁵Robinson, Works, I, 318. Francis Johnson offered a similar thought. "And it is not of ourselves or in the power of our free-will, as grace is offered, to receive or refuse it, to beleeve or not to beleeve, as we will ourselves: but is wholly the free gracious, and powerful work of God in us, as is aforesaid." Francis Johnson, A Christian Plea Conteyning Three Treatises (Amsterdam, 1617), p. 234.

Blessed be the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. Psalms 65:4.

The theme that election is the bestowal of grace rather than its reward is frequently repeated:

Faith, then, and holiness are not the fore-found conditions for which God chooseth a man: but the actual conferring and giving of them, according to an eternal purpose, is the very actual choosing of him: even that by which God severs, elects, selects, and chooseth him out of the mass of the wicked.⁷⁶

God's calling precedes man's believing. It is the calling that gives to a man the spirit and faith without which he cannot believe. A man's calling precedes his faith; justification and glorification follow it.

Since all men are by nature subject to sin and condemnation they might have been left by God with neither remedy nor redemption. If justice would have allowed God to leave all men to their natural state, God could not be accused of an injustice if He had chosen to save only a few. Robinson found reason for God's choosing some and passing others by in the fact that by so doing He could demonstrate both His justice in the destruction of sinners and His mercy in the redemption of those whom He chose to save.

⁷⁶Robinson, Works, I, 321. Compare Francis Johnson: ". . . the scripture sheweth, that our faith and holiness follow after God's election, as fruits thereof." "Seeing therefore the scripture teacheth, that the election of God, is according to the good pleasure of his own will: seeing also it is grounded on God and not on man; being certain and unchangeable; of the free grace and gift of God; to the glory and praise of his grace; causing and going before our faith and holiness of life; making infants partakers of the kingdome of heaven; and having the like cause, as is of the choice of the elect Angels, let us therefore with the scriptures, and according thereunto, acknowledge that the fountaine and original source of our election, is the will and good

The basis on which some were chosen and others left was a matter beyond his explanation. He suggested that men should concern themselves with matters more in the realm of their ability to understand:

Only, let our care and diligence be in the meanwhile, first to know assuredly, that we are ourselves of that blessed number, and by such marks, as cannot deceive; and so knowing, both to have in our hearts, and to express in word and deed all thankfulness unto our good God, and most gracious Father, who hath vouchsafed unto us, above many others, such singular mercy.⁷⁷

Robinson drew a distinction between the death of Christ being sufficient for all sinners and the death of Christ being for all sinners. He acknowledged the former, but denied the latter on the ground that it would have been ridiculous for Christ to have died for someone who would not benefit from the sacrifice. Christ's death was for sinners, who had no existence at that time, but they were sinners who would respond to his affection and exhibit grace, faith, repentance and would finally be justified. Such a conclusion was not only scriptural, but also logical:

The apostle's meaning, therefore, is not, that Christ died for all particulars, but that all for whom he died, shall be saved by

pleasure of God, to the praise of his name and glorie of his grace, forever," Johnson, op. cit., pp. 222, 223.

⁷⁷Robinson, Works, I, 328. Compare Francis Johnson: "They whom Christ hath redeemed by his death, have remission of sins through the blood of the crosse; receive the spirit of adoption of sonnes; are sanctified, renewed, and made conformable to the image of Christ; are never separated from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus; become members of that body whereof Christ is the head and saviour; are the Saints of the High ones, or of the highplaces; and have the angels sent forth to minister for them as being the heirs of salvation." Johnson, op. cit., p. 232.

him: which seeing all are not; it followeth that he died not for all, as they mean.⁷⁸

Robinson felt that the doctrine that Christ's death was for all sinners, regardless of whether they accepted it as their reconciliation, was a hateful babel far worse than that erected generations before on the plain of Shinar. He accused its proponents of attempting to scale down heaven and of depriving God of His rightful power, name, wisdom, and justice. They impeached His wisdom by thinking that He would buy with so rich and precious a price as the blood of His only begotten Son, any whom He certainly knew He would never possess by it. Secondly, it impeached God's power and made Him unable to save any more than He doth save, as if He wills to save some but is unable. God would be unjust in taking the full price and ransom for all men's sins from His surety--Christ, and then, not being satisfied, exact the debt for men's sins by damning them to eternal punishment.

Robinson recognized the existence of a faculty called conscience in all men, but he denied that this was an indication that God was speaking to every individual with an invitation to accept His grace. The conscience is but a reminder of the fact that all men are created in the image of God in Adam. Infants bring this law of nature into the world with them. The conscience which inclines to right is a footprint of God's image, but man cannot obey it because of his weak nature.

⁷⁸Robinson, Works, I, 330. Compare Francis Johnson: "Christ by his death has redeemed those onely, for whom the Lord's pleasure prospereth in his hand: whom also he maketh to be his seed, and him to be the chastisement of their peace, to be healed with his stripes." Johnson, op. cit., p. 231.

Man's weakness is a disposition contrary to the law of God and at war with those things for which he was created.

The ninth chapter of Romans further justifies God's determination of who should be saved and who will be lost. The whole question revolves around the good pleasure of God. He chooses with no apparent reason. He does so with complete justice because no man has any claim upon His favor. In Romans 9:17, Paul illustrates his case by the story of Pharaoh. He listed four points which may be taken from the story of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart:

1) To declare the purpose and power of God in the world. "For this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared through all the earth." Exodus 9:16.

2) Every end must have an efficient or working cause. The Glory of God was not the end of Satan's work, nor of Pharaoh's work; and therefore of God's work in it.

3) God hardened Pharaoh's heart, by sending Moses and Aaron unto him, as by an occasion, though not a cause; as the law is an occasion of sin, Romans 7:8; and the gospel the occasion of strife and variance.

4) God deprived Pharaoh of the use of common sense and reason, otherwise it would not have been, that after so many experiments by him taken of God's powerful hand against him, and for the Israelites, he should so furiously as he did, have followed them into the midst of the sea.⁷⁹

Robinson believed that the fact of God's judgment need not be of great concern to any if they would but approach the matter in the proper manner. They might note that the sun puts no ill savor into the dunghill, although the stink is increased if the sun shines hotly

⁷⁹Robinson, Works, I, 359.

and long.⁸⁰ Neither does God add harshness, impenitency or rebellion, but rather leaves unrestrained the corruption which He finds in men. Secondly, man is more willing to be impenitent than he is to live a devout and holy life. On the part of the man, such a life may be considered sin; in regard to God it may be considered punishment for former sin. Paul states in Hebrews:

Nay, but O man, who art thou that disputest with God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonour? Hebrews 6:20.

Robinson was willing to follow Paul's lead in both suppressing man's insolency which dares to question God, and in justifying God's absolute power over the creature, as the potter's over the clay.

III. OF FALLING AWAY

The Arminian position held that a person's salvation depended largely upon his own desires relative to the matter. He could choose to live in accordance with the principles of Jesus Christ for the power of Christ was available to make it possible. Salvation was of Christ, but man must choose to be saved. A man might make a profession

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 363. Robinson's simile of the sun's effect on the dunghill may well have been derived from an illustration used by John Calvin: "And whence, I ask, proceeds the fetid smell of a carcass, which has been putrefied and disclosed by the heat of the sun? It is visible to all that it is excited by the solar rays; yet no person on this account attributes to those rays an offensive smell. So when the matter of guilt and evil resides in a bad man, why should God be supposed to contract any defilement, if he uses his service according to his own pleasure?" Calvin, op. cit., I, xvii, 5.

of faith at one time and actually be in a saving relationship, and yet through neglect or change of heart fall away. The promise of eternal life rested upon the continuance of the condition of faith and obedience.⁸¹ A promise made upon a condition ordinarily cannot be kept until the condition is fulfilled. Thus God could not elect any to salvation until the possibility of their disregarding the conditions of salvation was precluded by their death. Robinson considered the election of dead men to be an absurd doctrine. He agreed that God neither purposed nor promised to save any except such as persevere in faith and repentance unto the end. He affirmed that the grace to persevere depends upon prior election and the good will of God.

Robinson's theological interpretations are founded upon the premise of God's complete sovereignty and power to accomplish His predetermined purpose. He considered the Arminian belief that a man might by his own actions foil God's purposes to be absurd. If a man living a just and devout life should apostasize and abandon his former principles, it is only an indication that the man was without divine calling.⁸²

⁸¹John Calvin did not believe men possessed this capacity. To the contrary he deplored the popularity of the idea: "Therefore everyone who in his preaching had kindly extolled the excellence of human nature, has received great applause from almost all ages." Calvin depreciated such presentations by further adding that the person so engaged, "will make no progress in the knowledge of himself, but will be absorbed in the most pernicious ignorance." Calvin, Institutes, II, i, 2. Compare John Calvin, A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1939), p. 41.

⁸²Calvin, Institutes, III, xxiv, 7.

A distinction must be made between the faithful man who is sustained by the grace of Christ and the man who sustains himself through his own efforts. The latter will ultimately fall away, as did the angels in heaven and Adam in the garden. Sustaining grace is not an inseparable faculty of the human soul as is reason. Sustaining grace is a gift:

Considering the same faithful person, as a living member of Christ's body, receiving nourishment from him the head; and given to Christ by the Father, that he might save him; as having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him; and as kept by the power of God, through faith to salvation, in that regard we deny, that it can come to pass possibly, that such a one should wholly fall away from the grace received.⁸³

William Perkins expressed many opinions which later came from the pen of John Robinson. He assumed the sinful nature of the human personality and gave little credence to the possibility of a man sustaining himself by his own strength of character. He felt that the difference between salvation and damnation was a matter of the restraint exercised by God over the person:

Thus without restraint they willingly fall from their integrity. God upon just causes leaving them to themselves, and freely suffering them to fall. For we must not think, that man's fall was either by chance, or God not knowing of it, or by his bare permission, or against his will: but rather miraculously, not without the will of God, and yet without all approbation of it.⁸⁴

Robinson pointed out that the faithfulness of the believer was not due to his own fidelity, but rested upon the admonitions of God. God ordained the Scriptures to keep and preserve all persons from apostasy. Since the scriptures were available, how could one of the

⁸³Robinson, Works, I, 369.

⁸⁴Perkins, op. cit., I, 19.

elect fall away? If a father holds a child's hand, can he stumble?

If left to himself he cannot walk, but he is not left alone. His

father upholds him and therefore he is unable to fall.

The truly faithful cannot fall away, because they, I say, being faithful, obedient, and of honest hearts, are by such exhortations, armed against such evil apostasy.⁸⁵

Salvation is the free gift of God. His love shed abroad in the heart draws the saving response from the individual:

For as the beams of the sun shed into the bosom of the earth first heat it, and so cause it to reflect heat again towards heaven: so by the love of God shed into our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given us, our hearts are most effectually drawn, and persuaded to love God again, and men, for, and according to him.⁸⁶

Salvation in the Puritan view depended upon faith and obedience. They, in turn, rested upon the continuance of God's love. The word of God is revealed in the heart only after God has opened it with His grace. In this holy work, He makes those who are alike become unlike and in spiritual consideration better than others, so much more beloved than others for the godly qualities wrought in them. In regard to those others, God not only hates the works of the wicked men, but also the workers of iniquity. Not, however, with a passion of the mind, as

⁸⁵Robinson, Works, I, 371. The appreciation of the Scriptures as an aid to the prevention of apostasy was characteristic of Calvinism. John Calvin called them the companion of the Holy Spirit in the work of God for man's salvation: "The operations of God on his elect are two fold--internally, by his spirit, externally, by his word. By his spirit illuminating their minds and forming their hearts to the love and cultivation of righteousness, he makes them new creatures. By his word he excites them to desire, seek, and obtain the same renovation." Calvin, Institutes, II, v, 5.

⁸⁶Robinson, Works, I, 384.

hatred is in men, but with the holy will to punish the violence to His righteous law. So:

. . . with a general love of the creator to the creature, he always, after a sort, loves the persons of men, as being his generation, yet he loves, as is meet, the honour of his holiness, more than the happiness of his creature, having violated and profaned it without repentance.⁸⁷

IV. OF FREE WILL⁸⁸

Robinson uses the following statement to introduce his brief chapter on "Free-Will":

After a loud blast in the beginning, as formerly, of their full and sufficient dealing in the former point, our adversaries begin this with a false, and foul accusation.⁸⁹

The Presbyterian party was continually charged with believing that good men are compelled to sin by God's power and that predestination is God's compulsion to wicked and foul deeds. Robinson's response to the charge is to attempt to draw a distinction between "necessity" and "compulsion." He seeks to show how a thing may be free and casual in itself, but may by the overruling hand of God's providence, be counted either good or evil. He attempted to resolve the dilemma by stating that man is free to choose evil, and that God, by His powerful

⁸⁷Ibid., I, 389.

⁸⁸ Calvin presented the statements of Origen and Anselm as the commonly accepted definitions of Free-Will: "Origen called it a power of reason to discern good and evil, of will to choose either. Augustine said it is a power of reason and will, by which good is chosen when grace assists; and evil, when grace is wanting." Calvin, Institutes, II, ii, 4.

⁸⁹ Robinson, Works, I, 393.

hand, governs a man according to His wise counsel and holy ends. God works that which is good by inclination, by His word and His spirit:

God herein first takes away the former corrupt inclination, that it reign not, which is a cord wherewith man is tied, as they speak, and then gives a new inclination contrary to the former, not hauling up by main force, as they mis-shape a similitude for us, but giving inward will and strength of grace for the man to raise himself up by.⁹⁰

According to the Calvinist view, whatsoever good or evil a man reveals outwardly, or inwardly, he uses liberty and freedom in choosing or refusing. He does it not by any violence or compulsion but from the inward principles of his mind, the understanding directing and the will consenting.

Robinson listed two points in an effort to remove any possibility of culpability being attributed to God for man's wicked behaviour:

Neither do the Calvinists, as they surmise, make either God's decree, or the defect of his grace in fault, if men repent not; because they affirm that God decreed not to give them the grace to repent, nor doth give it them; except either God may not require repentance at all, or be bound to give it to all. It is not my fault that a drunkard falls and lies in the street, though he cannot but both fall and lie there, except I hold and help him up; except withal I be bound to help him: nor my fault that a prodigal spendthrift comes into debt, and is cast into prison, and cannot escape the one, or other, unless I pay his debts; except withal I be bound to pay them: so neither is it God's fault that men remain and perish in their impenitency, out of which they neither will, nor can come without God's special gift of repentance, except it be God's bounden duty, as these men seem to make it, to bestow that grace upon them.⁹¹

The Arminians extended free-will to men and thought that a just God would give all men the same opportunity and possibility. Robinson, in contrast, extended free-will to God and gave Him the option of

⁹⁰Ibid., I, 394.

⁹¹Ibid., I, 395.

choosing those whom He would save and those whom He would damn. The only difference between the two was God's decision to give, or not to give, His grace and inclination toward righteousness.

If Robinson were asked, "Does man have free-will?" he would have replied in the affirmative. But he would mean that men choose freely according to the will given them by God. If given the will and the grace a man may choose to do right; but if he receive not that grace, he will choose according to his fallen and corrupt will.⁹²

Robinson states his position on free-will in the following manner:

. . . that all men in Adam have sinned, Romans 5:1-15; and by sin lost the image of God in which they were made; so as the law is impossible, Romans 8:3; unto them by reason of the flesh, and so cannot possibly but sin, by reason of the same flesh reigning in the unregenerate, and dwelling in all: . . . and that this so comes to pass by God's holy decree, and work of providence answerable, not forcing evil upon any, but ordering all persons in all actions, as the Supreme governor of all: and that the wicked, being left of God, some, destitute of the outward means, the gospel; all of them, of the effectual work of the Spirit, from that weak flesh, and natural corruption, daily increased in them, sin both necessarily as unable to keep the law, and willingly, as having in themselves the beginning and cause thereof, the blindness of their own minds, and perverseness of their will and affections; and so are inexcusable in God's sight.⁹³

⁹²John Calvin quoted Augustine's comparison of the human will to a horse, obedient to the direction of its rider; God and the devil were the two possible riders. "If God rides it, he, like a sober and skillful rider, manages it in a graceful manner; stimulates its tardiness; restrains its immoderate celerity; represses its wantonness and wildness; tames its perverseness, and conducts it into the right way. But if the devil has taken possession of it, he, like a foolish and wanton rider, forces it through pathless places, hurries it into ditches, drives it down over precipices, and excites it to obstinacy and ferocity." Calvin, Institutes, II, iv, 1.

⁹³Robinson, Works, I, 398.

The Arminians believed that through Christ one could fulfill the law, whereas Robinson believed: "We fulfill the law no further, than as we kill, crucify and destroy the flesh and lusts thereof by the spirit."⁹⁴

Robinson compared the Arminian view that a man might have some power over his own salvation with the absurdity of a child accomplishing his own begetting. The child does not beget himself. The adult accomplishes it for him. So God begets by the ministry of the Word, and man is begotten by Him. The begetting of creatures is before the being of the begotten.

The willingness to receive spiritual things, is a main fruit and effect of regeneration, and therefore, not a cause:

For the will, thus holily bent, presupposeth the understanding divinely enlightened, whose direction it follows, and without which going before, it is blind and brutish. Neither can a man possibly will a thing, but as he understands it to be good for him. If the understanding be divinely enlightened, and the will holily bent, then the whole man is therefore regenerated; that is begotten before by the spirit of regeneration.⁹⁵

If God's manner of working involved only the influencing of the will toward the right with persuasions and promises and by arguments, then the wise, the noble, and the learned would be led of God to be the leaders of His people, since they are the ones who best understand these things. But the reverse is true, "There were not many great among us." The Presbyterian view acknowledged that God's action affected both the will and the deeds of men. Robinson's position reveals no fundamental departure from the expressions of his

⁹⁴Ibid., I, 399.

⁹⁵Ibid., I, 402.

predecessor John Calvin on the subject of the sinful nature of man.

In clear terms John Calvin stated:

Let us hold this, then, as an undoubted truth, which no opposition can ever shake--that the mind of man is so completely alienated from the righteousness of God, that it conceives, desires, and undertakes everything that is impious, perverse, base, impure, and flagitious; that his heart is so thoroughly infected by the poison of sin, that it cannot produce anything but what is corrupt; and that if at any time men do any thing apparently good, yet the mind always remains involved in hypocrisy and fallacious obliquity, and the heart enslaved by its inward perverseness.⁹⁶

V. OF THE ORIGINAL STATE OF MANKIND

Robinson proposes that all men have sinned in Adam and are therefore guilty of death naturally and without mercy. Unborn infants have a kind of existence in Adam which makes them partakers of his sins. They are a part of Adam just as the branches are a part of the tree or plant. If they have being in Adam, they have life also in him; for nothing in Adam was dead.

According to Hebrews 7:9, Levi paid tithe to Abraham for he was even then in the loins of Abraham. Robinson reasoned that he could do nothing if he did not exist, so he must have had a kind of being in Adam. He further pointed out that the Gentiles will be judged by the law that was written in their hearts, even though they may be ignorant of the law written upon stone and given to the Jews. He believed that there was a natural conscience in the infant which should have led him to do the things that are written in the law:

⁹⁶Calvin, Institutes, II, v, 19.

As the young whelps and cubs of lions, bears and foxes, have in their natural and sensitive faculties, a proneness and inclination to raven; and every beast proneness to the things of its kind, after actually performed, and practised by them; so have infants necessarily in their reasonable faculties, a disposition, one or other, to understand and will things, specially as concern God, by reason of the most natural, necessary and indissoluble relation, between the reasonable creature, and the Creator, and that specially in those most noble faculties.⁹⁷

Robinson saw in the fact that a child under pressure will lie, even if he has never heard the idea of a lie, evidence that every child brings into the world a corrupt nature which needs only opportunity for expression. John Calvin called such a tendency "inherited corruption." He sought to convey the idea of the deprivation of a nature previously good and pure. Since all have descended from impure seed, all are born with the contagion of sin. Before any man had seen the light of this life he was soiled and spotted in God's sight.⁹⁸

Infants, like adults, need the spirit of Christ dwelling in them for the quickening and sanctification of their souls. When the spirit of God comes upon a person, infant or adult, it infuses all the habits of grace at once, but the fact of faith or believing comes before that of actual repentance:

We live the life of Christ, whereof our repentance is a part, by the faith of the Son of God. God purifieth the heart by faith; and justifies the ungodly by his faith. Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:9; Romans 4:5. In all which it is plain, that faith hath pre-eminence and first work.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Robinson, Works, I, 405.

⁹⁸Calvin, Institutes, II, i, 6.

⁹⁹Robinson, Works, I, 414. Compare: "Man is not possessed of free-will for good works, unless he be assisted by grace, and that special grace, which is bestowed on the elect alone in regeneration." Calvin, Institutes, II, ii, 6.

True repentance requires godly sorrow. Godly sorrow goes beyond the fear of punishment and sorrows for the offense of God personally. But none can be sorry for offending God, except he love God first, and that comes from knowing that he has been loved of God by Christ.

Robinson, as a conservative Calvinist, held to the doctrine that by virtue of his relationship to Adam, man is a partaker of his sins, and therefore a sinner from birth. He is a sinner first by thought and will and ultimately in deed. That such a creature of his own accord should respond to the right or be influenced by arguments or persuasions seemed absurd. His natural inclination would lead him in the opposite direction, unless there was a divine intervention which would prevent him from living out the natural responses of his own heart. His contention was that this was precisely what happened when God chose a person to be saved. This was the state of man which made it necessary that the plan of salvation should be based upon the doctrine of predestination.

Without the purposeful involvement of God in the arena of human life no man would have a chance for salvation. The fallen mind had no possibility of making a proper choice or even desiring salvation itself.

Thus God's act in bestowing salvation cannot be considered in any other manner than as a gracious act in regard to those whom He elects to save and as a matter of indifference in regard to those who are allowed to be lost.

VI. BAPTISM

Robinson, as stated earlier, does not stand out as a unique figure by virtue of unusual ideas or startling positions. The pleasure of reading his works comes rather from a knowledge of what was accomplished by those individuals who were fired by his preaching and inspired by his example. One may catch a glimpse of the compulsive appeal of his personality from the expressions which he occasionally uses to brighten a sentence or drive home a point. His humor is often subtle, but always effective. An illustration is his first sentence on the topic of baptism: "In the next place they come to baptism, in which they think themselves to be in their element, as a fish in the water."¹⁰⁰

Robinson drew a distinction between inward and outward baptism. Repentance goes before baptism, but repentance is inward and baptism outward. God gives repentance, but men confer baptism. William Perkins wrote of the sacramental nature of baptism as an outward indication of an inward transformation:

Baptism is a sacrament, by which such as are within the covenant, are washed with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost, that being thus engrafted into Christ, they may have perpetual fellowship with him.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰Robinson, Works, I, 415.

¹⁰¹Perkins, op. cit., I, 73. John Calvin considered the two-fold nature of Baptism as involving a sign of a person's faith before God, and a symbol of his confession before men. Calvin, Institutes, IV, xv, 1.

Perkins, like Robinson, sought to justify his theology and polity by the Scriptures. Occasionally, he felt justification in withdrawing the kernel of truth from the Scriptures while altering the actual scriptural practice. An example of such a compromise may be cited concerning the proper mode of baptism:

The auncient custom of baptizing, was to dippe, and as it were to dive all the body of the baptized in the water, as may appear in Paul, Romans 6; . . . but now especially in cold countries, the church useth only to sprinkle the baptized, by reason of the children's weakness, for very few of ripe years are now adaies baptized. We need not marvaile at this alteration, seeing charity and necessity may dispense with ceremonies, and mitigate the sharpness of them.¹⁰²

Robinson noted that the Scriptures do not discuss infant baptism, and that the requirements for adult baptism were too rigid for children to meet. To bridge the gap he purposes the following solution to the interpretation of the Scriptures of this matter:

We grant that the scriptures nowhere say, in express terms, Baptize infants, or that infants were baptized: but withal they should consider with us, that whatsoever can by just consequence be drawn out of the scriptures, expounded in their largest extent, is contained in them first: else how could it be truly drawn out of them.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Perkins, op. cit., p. 74.

¹⁰³Robinson, Works, I, 416. The Presbyterian latitude in the interpretation of the proper mode of baptism is one of the few liberties with Scripture which received the endorsement of its founders. "But whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only poured or sprinkled upon him, is of no importance; churches ought to be left at liberty, in this respect, to act according to the difference of countries. The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church." Calvin, Institutes, IV, xv, 19.

He illustrated his interpretation by showing that the Ten Commandments are an adequate law for the determination of human affairs, not because they contain all that needs to be done or prohibited, but because within the Ten Commandments principles of all phases of human relationships may be found.

Robinson believed that baptism was necessary for salvation. Since the scriptures taught that children would be in heaven, he assumed that the requirements for adult redemption must be met, at least in spirit, by the children. Repentance and confession could be met in part by the disposition of the child. The Puritans noted that the Old Testament rite of circumcision was administered to children and they assumed that baptism had superseded it as the Christian symbol of regeneration:

. . . it is evident that baptisme is answerable to circumcision, succeeding in the place thereof, to be the Lord's signe & seale of his covenant; and that baptisme now is to be administered to the believers and their children, as well as circumcision was before.¹⁰⁴

The Puritans believed that the child would naturally perform the good if placed in the proper atmosphere and taught of God. William Perkins supported this view:

Infants within the covenant, are such, as have one at the least of their parents faithful . . . so then, the faith of the parents maketh those their children to be accounted in the covenant, which by reason of their age do not actually believe.¹⁰⁵

Baptism was an outward act performed by man, symbolizing God's inward grace bestowed in the heart. It was God who effected the desire

¹⁰⁴Johnson, op. cit., p. 2. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, IV, xiv, 24.

¹⁰⁵Perkins, op. cit., p. 74.

for grace and repentance. The water was a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the disposition of the child toward repentance was the actual repentance of the adult whose baptism was a public testimony of his faith.

Robinson recognized the need of a different standard of judgment for children than that which measured adults. The fact that this was accorded them in other areas of life gave rise to his opinion that it extended to the realm of baptism. II Thessalonians 3:10 suggests that the person who does not work, should not eat, yet the children are fed. Mark 16:16 says that those who do not believe are to be damned, yet this is not taken seriously in regard to the children.

He further suggested that the attempt to exact repentance from children prior to their baptism, or to exclude them from baptism until they reach mature years springs from an improper understanding of the relationship between the Gospel and the law. Francis Johnson buttressed his opinion when he stated:

Abraham was circumcised as soon as the rite was instituted, Christ was baptized as soon as John was practicing it, thus the fact that Abraham was baptized [sic] at 90 and Jesus at 30 does not mean that this is the proper age for such a service.¹⁰⁶

The Gospel does not aim at exacting obedience from man as a natural debt from the creature to the creator. It considers him as

¹⁰⁶Johnson, op. cit., p. 21. The question of the proper age for baptism of children was a point of conflict between John Calvin and Michael Servetus. Servetus proposed that the proper age for baptism did not come until the person to be baptized was aware of the significance of the sacrament. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, IV, xvi, 31. Cf. R. Willis, Servetus and Calvin (London: Henry S. King, 1877), pp. 304-313. Cf. Roland Bainton, Hunted Heretic (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953).

a most miserable creature, drowned in sin, and altogether unable to save himself. The law provides a means whereby the service man owes to God can be declared and made manifest. The Gospel serves to declare what God in mercy purposeth, and doth, and will perform. The Gospel brings the joyful message of the glad tidings of salvation by Christ.¹⁰⁷

In an attempt to further delineate the requirements for baptism,

Robinson offered his definition of repentance:

Repentance, to wit, evangelical, required for baptism in men of years, is neither a sight, and knowing of sin by the law, for that the wicked also do: nor a confessing of sin, for that is outward, and follows repentance in the heart: nor a sorrow for sin, for that goes before it: nor a promise to forsake sin, for that follows after it, as an outward effect: no, nor yet properly, an endeavour to forsake it, though that come nearest. II Corinthians 7:10. Repentance is properly a growing wise afterwards, and changing of the mind from sin to forsake sin accompanying it as the effect thereof.¹⁰⁸

The theological positions which Robinson defends present no striking divergences from the teachings of other Separatists and Independents. Robinson is Geneva in thought, Protestant in behaviour, and Republican in principle. He sided with Conservatives in his defense of the Articles of the Synod of Dort but there is no evidence that his opinions were ever proclaimed with force or violence. The various presentations of his views are marked by his efforts to displace coercion with persuasion as the dominant force in ecclesiastical expansion.

¹⁰⁷ Robinson, Works, I, 418.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 420.

Robinson's farewell address left the door open to growth and development in religious thought and practice. The success of his congregation's efforts in the Plymouth Colony offers ample testimony to his proficiency in preparing a people to live not only in the world as they knew it, but also in the world which they sought to create. This is in itself the final task of theology--the preparation of a people who have the inherent vitality requisite for the creation of a new world. In their case it was a world in which freedom of thought, equality, and reward for personal industry would finally become realities rather than only possibilities.

Few today would find it easy to march to the rhythm of his particular concerns, but men everywhere salute the flag which his followers have implanted deeply in the mores of American life. Robinson stands as a seminal figure in American religious and political life. The ideas which he propounded have become a mighty sea whose waves lap many a shoreline of modern life.

A modern commentator has summed up the Puritan contribution in a precise paragraph. It is a contribution which had its origins in the theological foundations just perused. Perhaps the only just approach to Puritan theology is to judge it by its product rather than its particular parts:

The greatness of the Puritans is not so much that they conquered a wilderness, or that they carried a religion into it, but that they carried a religion which, narrow and starved though it may have been in some respects, deficient in sensuous richness or brilliant color, was nevertheless indissolubly bound up with an ideal of culture and learning. In contrast to all other pioneers, they made no concessions to the forest, but in the midst of frontier conditions, in the very throes of clearing the

land and erecting shelters, they maintained schools and a college, a standard of scholarship and competent writing, a class of men devoted entirely to the life of the mind and of the soul.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹Horton Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans (Westminister: Dacre Press, 1948), p. 6. Cf. Miller & Johnson, The Puritans (New York, 1938), pp. 11f.

CHAPTER III

THE THOUGHT OF JOHN ROBINSON

One of the foremost impressions resulting from a comprehensive reading of John Robinson's works is the wide range of his thought and interest. Like the Scriptures, he touches upon most of the significant areas of life. He makes copious references to a multitude of subjects. As an indication of his thought, his writings on a number of subjects have been brought together in an effort to locate him with reference to the world in which he lived.

The following subjects seem to provide an appropriate constellation of concern against which he can be plotted. The subjects were chosen according to the attention which he gave them as indicated by the volume of his material concerning them, except in one case in which his silence itself seemed indicative. The subjects in the order of their treatment are as follows: The Scripture, The Basis of Spiritual Life, The Sabbath, Science, Family Life, Literary Backgrounds, Practical Counsels, His Essays, The Anglican Church, and The Civil Magistrates.

I. JOHN ROBINSON AND SCRIPTURE

It would be impossible to consider the beginnings of Puritanism, Separatism and the entire English Reformation without an understanding of the place and significance of the Bible in the religious life of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When the Reformation removed the Pope from a position of authority in religious belief, it replaced him

with the idea of the authority of Scripture. The transition was no doubt beneficial, but the proponents of the move made one fundamental error. They claimed to be appealing to the authority of the Scripture, failing to recognize that they were referring to their own interpretation of Scripture.¹

Such concern, however, provided the vital spark which nourished the whole Puritan movement. The imaginative study of the Bible was the undergirding bulwark of the Puritan forefather. Other literary movements, though noble in character, affected only a few, but the study of the Bible became the national education. Its study was recommended by the King, its passages were translated by the Bishops, and read by the Puritans. The Bible told to all the story of another age, another race with such a wealth of narrative and lyrical force that each man recognized his own dim strivings after a new spirit. The effect of the near monopoly of this one book on the majority of the population is beyond estimate. A new religion arose, the mythus was the Bible stories and the pervading spirit, the belief that God was active in the affairs of men.

When a man read his Bible, his chamber became in fact his church. Each reader became his own interpreter for private study meant private interpretation. Thus it was the Bible which sowed the seeds of individualism and liberty for all.²

¹Christopher Hill, The Century of the Revolution (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), p. 93.

²George Macaulay Trevelyn, England Under the Stuarts (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933), pp. 60-61.

A comparison of John Robinson's scriptural quotations leaves the answer to the question of which Biblical version he used unanswered. P. Marion Simms, The Bible in America, states categorically that Robinson used the "Geneva Bible."³ Leonard Bacon, The Genesis of the New England Churches,⁴ compares Edward Winslow's account of John Robinson's "Farewell Address"⁵ which included a quotation from Ezra 8:21 with the same passage in the "Geneva Bible," as an indication that this was the version used by Robinson. This conjecture is indicative, but not conclusive. Winslow's reference to the Sermon came twenty-six years following its delivery and it is probable that he filled in the text by using the Geneva Bible rather than recalling Robinson's quotation word for word. John Wright presents evidence that several copies of the Geneva Bible were available in Plymouth Colony, one, the property of William Bradford, is still in existence today.⁶

The Bibles most readily available during Robinson's lifetime were the Geneva Bible of 1560,⁷ the Bishop's Bible of 1568,⁸ and the

³P. Marion Simms, The Bible in America (New York: Wilson Erickson, 1936), p. 90. The Holy Bible (Geneva: Rouland Hall, 1560).

⁴Leonard Bacon, The Genesis of the American Churches (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1784), pp. 284-285, note.

⁵John Robinson, "Farewell Address," in Edward Winslow, Hypocrisy Unmasked (London: 1646). Cf. note on "farewell address" in Chapter II, P.

⁶John Wright, Historical Bibles in America (New York: Thomas Whitaker, 1905), pp. 65-67.

⁷The Bible and Holy Scriptures Contained in the Olde and New Testament (Geneva: R. Hall, 1560).

⁸The Holie Bible (London: Richard Jugge, 1568).

King James Version of 1611.⁹ The Anglican origin of the Bishop's Bible would probably have precluded Robinson's usage; the 1611 King James Version was available but its use was unlikely in view of Robinson's Leiden residence. Hence the conjecture that the Geneva Bible was used by Robinson seems the most plausible. However, a comparison between the scriptural quotations used by Robinson and the known versions indicates that he follows no established version to the letter. It would appear that Robinson makes his own translation or summary of the text, making it impossible to establish which version of the Bible he used.

Robinson's Variety of Scriptural Usage

The collected writings of John Robinson contain 194 substantial references to scriptural passages. These references are drawn from thirty-six of the sixty-six Biblical books. Thirty-eight references are from the Old Testament with the book of Genesis being used most frequently--six times. One hundred and fifty-six are taken from the New Testament; I Corinthians being used thirty times, Matthew twenty-six, Acts twenty, Romans seventeen, John twelve and all other chapters less than seven times. In harmony with the anti-Catholic spirit of the times, Robinson does not refer to the books of the Apocrypha.

II. THE BASIS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

The fundamental pre-eminence of the Scriptures was a basic tenet of the Puritan faith. Within the Sacred Text the Puritan found the

⁹The Bible (London: Robert Barker, 1611).

last court of appeal by which every doctrine and action was to be judged. The Book was the basis of the faith and all faith was to be tested by the source. Robinson recognized the tendency to substitute the plain statements concerning the character of God as recorded in the Scripture with the devisings of human thought. Such activity drew a stern reproof:

Some ambitious and curious wits, . . . have laboured to depress, and pull him down to their dwarfish conceptions of him; and have indeed, rather made him some great and giant-like man, or angel, than, as he is in truth, an infinite God.¹⁰

Robinson believed that God could not be bound within the confines of human conception. The Scriptures alone were to be allowed the right of circumscribing the character of divinity. Robinson believed that the Scriptures when properly translated give a faithful representation of divinity, but he also stressed the desirability of turning to the Scriptures in the original tongue whenever possible. In his own words, "The waters are most pure, and sweet in the fountain, so are all writings, Divine and human in their original tongues."¹¹

Robinson saw in his own experience a validation of that which he found in the Scriptures. Believing that no good thing resided in himself, he attributed the turning of his own heart from sin to God to be a visible manifestation of the reality and power of God. He acknowledged that love usually presupposes love, but in the case of God, his "love causeth all good, wrought, or to be wrought in the

¹⁰John Robinson, The Works of John Robinson. Edited by Robert Ashton (London: John Snow, 1851), I, 2.

¹¹Ibid., I, 41.

creature."¹² Robinson believed that God was the source of all good, but that much which passed as religion was not good. He pointed out the fact that:

Religion is the best thing and the corruption of it the worst: neither hath greater mischief and villany ever been found amongst men, Jews, Gentiles, or Christians, than that which hath marched under the flag of religion, either intended by the seduced, or pretended by hypocrites.¹³

Robinson was obviously a staunch supporter of the church as a corporate body which acted as God's representative upon the earth, but he was also aware of the important role of personal religion in the life of devotion and experience. He concluded that the most significant level was the personal, "A man hath in truth, so much religion as he hath between the Lord and himself, in secret, and no more."¹⁴ He saw providence in the wise blending of the sovereignty of the Deity and a sincere concern for the well-being and happiness of man. That which serves God's best interest also contributes to the fundamental needs of man:

This religion is the means of God's worship, and withal, of man's happiness: which two main ends, God in great wisdom and mercy hath joined together inseparable, that the desire of the latter might provoke to conscience of the former, and the exercise of the former effectually promote, and further the obtaining of the latter.¹⁵

An activity of such single importance, effecting man at such an integral level of his own being, is bound to produce a diversity of

¹²Ibid., I, 4.

¹³Ibid., I, 33.

¹⁴Ibid., I, 32.

¹⁵Ibid.

feeling and expression going far beyond a person's preparation for theological discussion and debate. Robinson noted that, "No faculty hath so many unskillful ones to meddle in it; as that of disputing in matters of religion."¹⁶ Robinson was not opposed to the necessity of debate, but the spirit which frequently accompanied it:

Disputations in religion are sometimes necessary, but always dangerous; drawing the best spirits into the head from the heart, and leaving it empty of all, or too full of fleshly zeal and passion if extraordinary care not be taken still to supply, and fill it anew with pious affections towards God, and loving towards men.¹⁷

Robinson relished debate and discussion among sincere Christians who sought to understand further the relevant points of faith and doctrine. Unfortunately, however, debate and disputations were frequently called for in an attempt to answer critics who sought to represent not only, or not exclusively, the objective interests of the honest seekers of truth, but also the representatives of the State Church. Robinson feared and dreaded such debate, for it tended to move from persuasion to coercion. In civil matters, force and violence may have some occasional justification, but in the realm of the spirit other motivations were required:

If it be further objected, that men may be by the magistrate constrained to outward acts of justice, honesty, and the like, though destitute altogether of the inward virtues; it may be answered, that these serve properly, and immediately to preserve civil societies, of which magistrates are properly kings and lords, and so do obtain their proper ends, if the very outward things be done, though never so willingly: but of religious actions the proper end is not civil society, nor is attainable but by faith, and devotion in the heart of the doers.¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid., I, 36.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., I, 41.

Anglicanism in Robinson's day had received a vast inheritance from the Roman Catholic Church. It had accepted the idea that coercion is acceptable in spiritual matters. Robinson believed the preponderance of evidence pointed in another direction. He made the following observation concerning those compelled to act in a manner contrary to conscience:

I answer, that neither good intents, nor events, which are casual, can justify unreasonable violence: and withal, that by this course of compulsion many become atheists, hypocrites, and familists: and being at first constrained to practice against conscience, lose all conscience afterwards.¹⁹

Robinson was quick to accord a high place to authority, but drew a line between the authority of God and the authority often claimed by prelates and magistrates. He noted:

Divine Authority is to sway above all reason: yea reason teacheth, that God is both to be believed, and obeyed in the things for which man can see no reason.²⁰

The authority of God, however, was no justification for the high-handedness of man. Even God, with his unquestioned authority, frequently annexed reasons to his precepts as an example for the most powerful and mighty upon earth to prefer reason to authority. Robinson had harsh words for those who preferred to rule men by authority rather than the compliance of their own reason:

And the man that would not rather rule by reason, yea, beasts, if they were capable thereof, than by violent authority, is himself, inhuman, and beast-like.²¹

¹⁹Robinson, Works, I, 41.

²⁰Ibid., I, 53.

²¹Ibid., I, 54.

Robinson enumerated the Protestant principle of the priesthood of every believer when he stated that in the realm of faith, "The meanest man's reason . . . is to be preferred before all authority of all men."²² While Robinson had high regard for the right of every man to make his own decision in the realm of faith and practice, he did not seek to depreciate the value of a cooperative search for the truth. The sincere seeker for knowledge should not wrong himself by undue credulity, nor should he wrong others with excessive suspicion. To receive the thought of another man without examination would be to make him a god, to reject it without investigation would give the impression that he was only a fool.²³

Robinson illustrated the principle of the cooperative search for God with the use of a New Testament story:

. . . and though we see not the truth by other men's eyes, but by our own, yet may we be something held up in the arms of their testimony to see it the better, and so be helped, as Zaccheus was, by the tree, into which he climbed, to see Christ.²⁴

Whether the search for truth be a solitary journey, or the destination of the Christian community, the quest is to be undertaken out of love for God. "To love God is to become Godly, and to have the mind after a sort deified."²⁵ Then, with the mind deified, and attuned to the revelation of God, reason may take its role in the structuring of belief and practice. To a man who is aware of his dignity as a created being and the possessor of a distinguished education, the faculty of

²²Ibid., I, 53.

²³Ibid., I, 56.

²⁴Ibid., I, 57.

²⁵Ibid., I, 64.

reason is important. Robinson had high regard for man's mental faculties and considered them to be the marks of humanity:

Reason is that wherein man goes before all other earthly creatures and comes after God only, and the angels in heaven. For whereas God and nature hath furnished other creatures, some with horns, some with hoofs, others with other instruments, and weapons both defensive, and offensive; man is left naked, and destitute of all those, but may comfort himself in that one endowment of reason, and providence, whereby he is enabled to govern them all. Now, who would not strive to excel other men in that, where in men excel all other creatures? How much more, in that, to which few men attain, true faith and the life thereof?²⁶

Robinson recognized that reason might be a two edged sword. While one person would discover and draw near to God through the avenue of reason, another may attempt to rationalize a world without God for the security of his corrupt person:

Some are atheists in opinion; others in affection; but many more in conversation of life. There are but few of the first coat, and which can so wholly blot out the remainders of God's image written by creation in their hearts, as to leave them altogether empty, and devoid of the knowledge, conscience and reverence of a Divine Majesty; and which came to conclude roundly in their hearts, that there is no God. Yet, some, without doubt, in time, and by degrees, proceed from Atheism in conversation, to Atheism in affection; and from Atheism in affection to Atheism in opinion and judgment. Men civilly honest, seldom or never become Atheists in persuasion; but lewd and flagitious persons do; who being pursued by the fury of an accusing conscience for heinous evils, wish, and no marvel, that there were no judge in heaven to condemn them; and so come at last to be persuaded in themselves of that, which they gladly would have true; and are justly left of God to such horrible delusion, that so sinning without fear, they may perish without remedy.²⁷

Robinson believed that reason was the gift of God for the beginning of a significant and worthy life. The quality of that life, the value of its contribution to humanity depended upon preparation. It required diligent study of both the Word of God and the ways of men:

²⁶Ibid., I, 67.

²⁷Ibid., I, 68.

We must first love, and attain to the knowledge of the truth in ourselves, first; lest we be clouds without rain, promising that to others, which we ourselves want; and must in our places, afterwards make manifestation and profession of it; and not be like the grave, insatiable in receiving in, and barren in returning anything back.²⁸

Robinson saw in the language of John 1:1 a hint at the relationship between the heart and the mouth. "The second person of the Trinity is not called the work of God, but the Word of God."²⁹ In another fitting epigram he stated in regard to a person's profession and his practice, "Good language joined with real performance, is as a pleasant sauce to wholesome meat."³⁰

Robinson gave first allegiance to the God of heaven but he also recognized the importance of the God within--the conscience. He saw the conscience as a divine agency placed in man by God. He believed that the first duty of man is to inform his conscience aright and then follow the direction which it gives.³¹ Continuing he stated:

Every man's conscience is, as it were, a second God within him, both to judge of his actions within and without him, and also of his person, and personal state, and whether in it he be accepted of God, or not. And surely a great work of God it is that he hath created, and set such an overseer as this conscience is, in the soul of man, by which, if he do anything amiss, he is checked in secret, that so by repentance he may find mercy at God's hands.³²

John Robinson found the basis of morality, religion and ethics in his relationship with God. Faith in the Father was not a matter of religion separated in some way from the daily round of life, but it was rather life itself. All that he was or did found its origin in his

²⁸Ibid., I, 74.

²⁹Ibid., I, 101.

³⁰Ibid., I, 103.

³¹Ibid., I, 195.

³²Ibid., I, 193.

spiritual concerns. He accorded a central place in his thinking to the topics of Authority, Scripture, Reason, Service and Conscience. These were the factors which marked the humanity of man and the essence of Christianity. For Robinson, to be religious, to be Christian in the fullest sense, was to be human to the fullest degree and to recognize one's heritage as a child of God and son of the Father.

III. JOHN ROBINSON AND THE SABBATH

Sabbatarianism was a subject of which Robinson devoted little attention in comparison to some of the earlier Puritans. The briefness of his comments on the subject is all the more striking in view of the fact that the observance of the Sabbath on the Christian day with the Jewish prohibitions may well be the singular unique theological contribution of the English to the continental Reformation.³³ Neither Luther nor Calvin felt strongly about the sacredness of the day. Both considered it sufficient to hear the service in the morning and then devote the remainder of the day to whatever activity seemed either prudent or important, be it recreation or productive labor.

England, however, faced a different problem than that of the continent. Sundays and holy days had taken on the character of licentious, drunken orgies. Over 100 days had been set aside in every year for some celebration or festival. As a result little attention was given to the hearing of services and to other efforts for the general

³³M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 442.

improvement of the populace.³⁴

The source of Puritan concern is evident in view of the attitude with which the Bible was embraced. Two commandments in particular were being disregarded according to the Puritans. The concern over idolatry had been largely dissipated by the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 which diminished Roman Catholic power and influence. The dispute over the proper observance of the Sabbath was not to be settled so easily.

The spark which ignited the Sabbatarian controversy was struck on Sunday, January 13, 1583, when a scaffold holding observers at a bearbaiting pit toppled over and killed eight people. John Field, a Puritan minister rose to the occasion and produced a tract entitled A Godly exhortation by occasion of the Late Judgement of God Shewed at Parris Garden.³⁵ He grants that the scaffold was old, rotten, and overloaded, therefore no real miracle of destruction can be claimed, but the fact that no piece or post was left standing upright seemed to him an indication of divine intervention.

Two years later, Parliament took up the subject and passed a law for stricter observance of the Sabbath, but Queen Elizabeth quickly vetoed it in harmony with her policy to alter nothing in the

³⁴Douglas Campbell, The Puritan in Holland, England, and America (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), pp. 157-158. For a summary of the manners and times compare Henry Martyn Dexter and Morton Dexter, The England and Holland of the Pilgrims (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906), pp. 3-52.

³⁵John Field, A Godly exhortation by occasion of the Late Judgement of God Shewed at Parris Garden (London, 1583). A brief biography of John Field may be found in Benjamin Brook, Lives of the Puritans (London, 1813), i, 318.

ecclesiastical government.³⁶

Lancelot Andrews put forth almost all of the Puritan arguments to be advanced in favor of Sabbath observance in the 17th century in several manuscripts which he prepared in the last decade of the 16th century. He asserts that the injunction to observe the Sabbath is a moral one. He suggests that the day was altered in the time of the apostles to commemorate such events as the resurrection and pentecost and to indicate that the Jewish dispensation had terminated.³⁷

Andrews' works were not published until after his death, but his ideas were circulated in manuscript form. Richard Greenham's A Treatise on the Sabbath,³⁸ incorporated most of Andrews' ideas. A statement indicating both Andrews' and Greenham's attitude on the proper use of the Sabbath is offered in the following paragraph:

For seeing the Sabbath day is the school day, the fair day, the market day, the feeding day of the soul, when men purely knowing the use of it, separate it wholly from other days, they shall see, how they may recover themselves from sins already past, arm themselves against sin to come, grow in knowledge, increase in faith, and how much they shall be strengthened in the inner man.³⁹

³⁶John Strype, Annals of the Reformation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1824), Book I, Chapter XXIV, 296, pp. 426-432. Strype gives Sergeant Puckering's speech "For the better and more reverend observing of the Sabbath-day." This speech marks the first time Sunday is referred to as Sabbath in Parliament.

³⁷Lancelot Andrews, A Patterne of Catechisticall Doctrine (London, 1630).

³⁸Richard Greenham, "A Treatise on the Sabbath," The Works of Richard Greenham (London: Felix Kingston, 1599).

³⁹Ibid., p. 290.

Greenham's son-in-law, Nicolas Bownd, took the next step and put the arguments into book form. His work entitled The True Doctrine of the Sabbath appeared in 1595.⁴⁰ In terms of influence it was one of the most remarkable books ever written. Bownd believed in the necessity of a radical transformation of English morality. He presented the idea that the profanation of the rest day, tended toward the profanation of all of life and that society's only hope was to restore the day of rest to its intended sanctity. Bownd sought to elevate the Sabbath, and at the same time declare the Crown and Church's utter impotency to make any other day holy. This claim drew the opposition of Queen Elizabeth and Archbishop John Whitgift. Orders were issued in 1599 and 1600 for all persons in possession of the book to give it up. All repressive efforts proved vain and another issue was published following Whitgift's death. Henceforth a distinguishing mark of the Puritan has been his rigid observance of the Sabbath.⁴¹

The importance of the Puritan contribution of the Sabbath to contemporary religion was well stated by Lyman Coleman in his work Ancient Christianity Exemplified in the Life of the Primitive Christians.⁴² He points out that:

⁴⁰Nicolas Bownd, The True Doctrine of the Sabbath (London: F. J. Porter, 1595).

⁴¹Cf. Campbell, op. cit., pp. 157-160. Cf. Robert Cox, The Literature of the Sabbath Question (Edinburgh: MacLachlan and Stewart; and Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1865), I, 145-151. This massive two volume work is the most extensive bibliographical reference available on the subject of the Sabbath.

⁴²Lyman Coleman, Ancient Christianity Exemplified in the Life of the Primitive Christians (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1852).

The divine authority of the Sabbath, was neither recognized by the ancient Fathers, nor by Luther or Calvin, nor by the early Reformers. It was reserved for the Puritans, to their immortal honor, first to expound and enforce the law of the Christian Sabbath, based on the authority of God's word. They better read the Law of the Lord our God on this subject, and bringing it out from the enormous mass of saint's days and festivals with which the church had overlaid it, like some priceless gem disinterred from the rubbish of many generations, presented it to the gaze and adoration of the world, radiant with heaven's own lustre. The influence of the sun in the heavens is not more clear or genial than is that of the Christian Sabbath, holy unto the Lord, by God's command. With all else throughout Christendom the Sabbath is a holiday, a festival observed by common consent like other saint's days and festivals of the calendar.⁴³

By 1617, the influence of Puritanism reached a level which threatened to restrict the activities of the general population on Sunday afternoons. To stem the tide James I published a declaration authorizing legal recreations on the Sabbath.⁴⁴ He pointed out three practical reasons for allowing innocent recreations. He believed that the refusal to allow the people their simple pleasures would open the church to the attack of the many recusants who would then say that the Established church was opposed to the pleasure and happiness of the people, secondly, if the people were denied the exercise of vigorous recreation they might become unfit for fighting should a war break out, thirdly, without recreation to occupy the hours following divine service many would be tempted to excessive tipling and drunkenness.⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., p. 132. Quoted by Cox, op. cit., p. 151.

⁴⁴James I, The King Majesties Declaration to His Subjects concerning lawful Sports to be used (London: Bonham Norton, 1618).

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 3.

The Laudian Bishop, Pierce, a few years later, added a fourth objection: if men had no sports to occupy them on Sundays, they might meet for illegal religious discussion. Pierce was notorious for putting down sermons because they hindered the sale of church ales--the riotous jollifications at which money was raised for the parish funds.⁴⁶

James I, as an opponent of Puritanism, was always anxious to respond to public feeling when it ran counter to Puritan beliefs. His declaration stated:

No lawful recreation shall be barred to Our good people, which shall not tend to the breach of Our aforesaid laws, and canons of our church.⁴⁷

He gave his approval to dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May games and May poles and the judicious use of ale.⁴⁸ Bull and bear baiting were frowned upon and bowling was a pleasure denied to the meaner sort of persons.⁴⁹

As a Puritan, Robinson had a higher regard for the day of rest. The day was set apart by God in the Decalogue, for the purpose of edification and spiritual enlightenment. He believed that the Godly should plan to take time for worship and reflection and that the divinely appointed time for such religious devotions was the Sabbath.⁵⁰

Robinson's discussion of the Sabbath question was included in his A Just and Necessary Apology which was published in 1625.⁵¹

⁴⁶Hill, op. cit., p. 85.

⁴⁷James I, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Robinson, Works, III, pp. 46-48.

⁵¹John Robinson, A Just and Necessarie Apology of Certain Christians Commonly Called Brownists or Borrowists (Leyden: 1625).

Robinson recognizes that the day celebrated as the Sabbath by the Christian world of his day was not the Sabbath to which the fourth commandment of the Decalogue referred. He believed that the change from Saturday to Sunday was merely circumstantial. He further suggested that Christ himself had taught the disciples all things necessary for salvation and that they had met for worship on the first day of the week. He recalled a number of Biblical references to occasions of Sunday worship and gathering by the early Christian church.⁵²

He indicated that the sanctification of the Sabbath should involve several aspects of the Christian's behavior and concern. The people were to rest from their toils and labors. They were to recall God's benevolences in the past. They were to grow in piety toward God and charity toward men. They were to refrain from meddling with the babble of mankind who give no concern to spiritual values.⁵³

Robinson recognized that there was nothing particularly sacred about a particular day, but that the sacredness was determined by that to which the day was devoted. He believed that the more frequently a man heard the Word of God, the more affection he would have for it, just as hunger for the "Word" diminishes among those who hear it infrequently.⁵⁴

⁵²Robinson, Works, III, 49. Jesus was raised on the first day, John 20:19,26. Paul held a meeting on the first day of the week, Acts 20:6,7. The offerings were gathered on the first day of the week, II Corinthians 16:1,2. John called the first day of the week, "the Lord's day," Revelation 1:7.

⁵³Robinson, Works, III, 50.

⁵⁴Ibid., III, 51-54.

Robinson saw in the efforts of every society to establish a Holy Day an indication of the spirit of God working in every heart. Man, however, was not intended to follow the dictates of his own conscience and interpretation, but to live in harmony with God's plan and will. That plan and will included the sanctity of the Sabbath Day for man's betterment and devotion to God.

IV. JOHN ROBINSON AND THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

John Robinson's silence on the subject of science seems at first to be almost irresponsible. Within a century of his birth a world had been discovered which made the description "Old World" appropriate for Europe. Scarcely half a century before, the observations of Copernicus had promised a new intellectual construct for man's comprehension of the universe. While eminent Divines debated at Leyden, Galileo heard his theories condemned by the Pope. Simultaneously Kepler was formulating his three laws relating to the movement of stellar bodies. Yet not one reference or allusion to the emerging scientific world escapes Robinson's pen.

Though ignorant of each other, Robinson and Galileo affected a complementary work in their respective fields. The one moving the center of authority from the greater to the lesser as he championed the rights of every man to determine the recipient of his religious and spiritual allegiance, the other moving from the lesser to the greater, shifting the center of the universe from a spinning planet to a distant

star--the sun.⁵⁵

The explanation for Robinson's silence on the scientific revolution can be explained by Robinson's acceptance, perhaps unwittingly, of the Baconian dichotomy of science and religion. Bacon was willing to limit scientific investigation to the works of God and leave observations about God to the theologians.⁵⁶ Robinson seems to have been willing to look at the reverse side of the question and confine his observations to those things which were in the realm of revelation rather than observation.

Christopher Hill, in his Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution suggests that Robinson was highly influenced by Francis Bacon. He attempts to show that Robinson's teaching on the use of Reason, along with his contemporaries, eventually opened the door to modern scientific thought.⁵⁷

Robinson's lack of interest in astronomy may have had an entirely different basis. The remarkable advances in the study of the universe were tainted by association with astrology. When Elizabeth ascended the throne, as Astrologer, John Dee, was asked to determine a favorable day according to the movement of the stars. Later, when the Queen was ill he was sent to Europe to consult with continental

⁵⁵J. J. Fahie, Galileo, His Life and Work (London: John Murray, 1903), pp. 146-177.

⁵⁶F. H. Anderson, The Philosophy of Francis Bacon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 95. Cf. Francis Bacon, The Works of Francis Bacon (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1909), I, 299-301; VI, 72, 75, 420-421, 424; VII, 108-109; VIII, 124-126.

⁵⁷Hill, Intellectual Origins, pp. 114, 116, 119.

physicians in an effort to discover the proper medication.⁵⁸

Another factor which deserves mention is the normal Renaissance manner of looking at science. Science was a subdivision of philosophy, and in the university curriculum it constituted a part of the liberal arts. Tradition confined it to mathematics and astronomy. Before the age of specialization and the development of experimental methodology, science sat quietly among its relations in the family of knowledge. It was neither feared, nor accorded any position of ascendancy over other areas of learning and knowledge.⁵⁹

The impact of science upon the later Puritans is more apparent. In 1667 John Milton wrote Book VIII of "Paradise Lost." At that date the astronomy of Claudius Ptolemaeus was still widely accepted, but Galileo had made his mark. In the passage in which Adam discusses the nature of the universe with the angel Raphael, almost all of his astronomical speculations reflect Galileo's theories. Milton is delighted with the new vision of the heavens but he fears that scientific investigation may be antagonistic to religion and is one with the church in bidding man to be "lowly wise": "Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid: Leave them to God above; him serve and fear."⁶⁰

⁵⁸Johann Kepler 1571-1630, Anthology (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1931), pp. 58-85.

⁵⁹Paul H. Kocher, Science and Religion in Elizabethan England (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1953), pp. 12-13.

⁶⁰F. Sherwood Taylor, Galileo and the Freedom of Thought (London: Watts, 1938), pp. 198-202.

Robinson's failure to note the scientific advances of his time is an indication that he still believed that the only avenue to the throne of God lay through the revelation which was contained in the Scriptures. Since he believed science to be indifferent to salvation he gave it no attention. He left it to later generations to discover the full truth of the Psalmist's declaration that "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handywork." (Ps. 19:1)

That discovery was not long in coming. Two years following Robinson's death, Reverend George Hakewill published An Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World.⁶¹ The work raised the standard of the "moderns" against the "ancients." It argued that scientific investigation was more important than traditional authority. Hakewill held that it was man's duty to study the universe and understand its laws of operation. He believed that such studies would restore to the human mind the vigor it enjoyed before the fall.

From our modern vantage point we may assume that new discoveries and propositions were greeted with the same enthusiasm which mark the orbit of a satellite or the announcement of a new serum today. However, initial discoveries must frequently overcome many stops of the mind. In every sphere there were authorities--in philosophy Aristotle, in medicine Galen, in geography and astronomy Ptolemy. The Reformation demolished the authority of the Pope, but it erected in his place the

⁶¹George Hakewill, An Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World (Oxford: J. Lichfield, A. W. Turner, 1627).

theory of the Divine Right of Kings and the authority of the Scriptures.⁶²

The Puritan mind regarded God as the source and final end of science. Scientific methodology was a device and not a philosophy. The Puritan believed that religion changed only on the surface, that at its heart was a peace given by the eternal to those who must dwell in time. They saw in the findings of science successive stages in the self revelation of one whose will is always done on earth, through discord, or concord.⁶³

V. FAMILY LIFE⁶⁴

The saints married early and as often as mortality gave occasion, and they begot children without restraint. Like all other activities to which men are called, marriage was an opportunity for spiritual effort, something to be sanctified by the spirit. The Puritan exaltation of the family could only serve to make the godly hold to that conception more earnestly.

Puritan individualism also had to be taken into account. That individualism frequently favored the male role if a choice was to be made:

⁶²Hill, The Century of the Revolution, pp. 92-93.

⁶³Kocher, op. cit., p. 330.

⁶⁴Chilton Lathom Powell offers an excellent discussion of the theory and practice of family life as revealed in the law and literature of the times. Chilton Lathom Powell, English Domestic Relations 1487-1653 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1917). Cf. Edmund Sears Morgan, The Puritan Family (Boston: The Trustees of the Public

But now seeing there is seldom or never found such conformity between man and wife, but that differences will arise and be seen, and so that one must give way, and apply unto the other; this, God and nature layeth upon the woman, rather than upon the man; although the man should not too much look for it, nor use all his authority, ordinarily at least, which none but fools do.⁶⁵

The wife was subordinate to her husband but equally responsible to God. She was the "weaker vessel," but with a single advantage to compensate for her frailty--she had her husband to guide her!⁶⁶

Robinson countered the observation that the woman is a necessary evil with the question, "how evil is the man for whom she is necessary?"⁶⁷

Robinson had freed himself from the tradition that chastity was spiritually superior to marriage. In response to the witticism that marriage fills the earth, and virginity heaven, he countered, "How shall heaven be full if the earth were empty?"⁶⁸

Library, 1944). Morgan's book is a standard work. Cf. Knappen, op. cit. Knappen offers an excellent chapter on Puritan family life. pp. 451-465.

⁶⁵Robert Cleaver pointed out the fact that rulership did not mean tyranny. The husband was to love his wife as his own flesh. Solomon called a man's wife "his crown" (Proverbs 12:4). No king tramples his crown. The wife was to be like a judge joined with her husband for the ruling of the family. The husband was to command her as the soul commands the body. Robert Cleaver, A Godly Form of Household Government (London: 1598), pp. 197, 201, 202, 209, 210.

⁶⁶Robinson, Works, I, 239. Richard Greenhorn added his testimony to such attitudes when he told a prospective bride:

"If you have the wisdom of Abigail, and all other graces which are in any woman, yet if you wanted obedience to your husband I tell you true that you are nothing worth and you could have no part in Jesus Christ who denieth himself to be governor of any that will not acknowledge their husband to be their head."

Richard Greenham, The Workes of Richard Greenham (London, 1612), p. 126.

⁶⁷Robinson, Works, I, 236.

⁶⁸Ibid.

Robinson, following the Pauline hint, observed that marriage was a protection against the sin of adultery,⁶⁹ but he does not suggest that it would be better to remain single. The difference in outlook is perhaps a reflection of their differing experiences in family life. Robinson reveals his ability to interpret the spirit of the law, as well as the letter, in the following statement concerning the relationship between the husband and wife:

As a man may surfeit at his own table or be drunken with his own drink; so may he play the adulterer with his own wife, both by inordinate affection and action.⁷⁰ For howsoever the marriage bed covers much inordinateness this way: yet must modesty be observed by the married, lest the bed which is honourable and undefiled, in its right use, become by abuse hateful, and filthy in God's sight. It hath been by some well observed, that divers of the patriarchs conversed with many wives, whom they took out of a single desire of a plentiful progeny, more chastely, than many others did and do with their one.⁷¹

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 241.

⁷⁰William Perkins had earlier noted the possibilities of fornication even in the conjugal relationship. He believed such to be the case when sexual relationships were engaged in immoderately. William Perkins, The Works of William Perkins (London: John Legatt, 1613), I, 62; III, 689. Cf. Nicolas Bownd prescribed sexual abstinence during the days of the fast periods. Nicolas Bownd, The Holy Exercise of Fasting Described (London, 1604), p. 56. Quoted by Knappen, op. cit., p. 453.

⁷¹Robinson, Works, I, 242. The Puritans have gained from their detractors a reputation for asceticism which is not easily dispelled. Yet, if we can believe their statements, they never regarded marriage as a truly spiritual arrangement. When John Cotton (1640-1699, first son of the John Cotton of Boston) joined a couple in matrimony in 1694, he preached a sermon in which he recalled the case of a couple who immediately upon marriage, without ever approaching the nuptial bed, indented with mutual consent to sequester themselves from one another, and gave themselves up to the contemplative life. Cotton observed that the arrangement was regarded as one of no ordinary virtue. But he said, "I must be pardoned in it, if I can account it no other than as effort of blind zeal, for they are the dictates of a blind mind they

The wife was to be subject to her husband, but no proper husband should expect more in the way of obedience and servitude than the good wife would be willing to give voluntarily. Robinson believed that the husband and wife should be a credit to each other and that each should be a constant testimonial to the virtues of the other. He makes an interesting statement concerning this possibility:

The virtue of the wife is the husband's ornament, so is the husband's the wife's, much more. And therefore Philon's wife, being demanded why she alone went so plainly appparelled, made answer, that her husband's virtues were ornament enough for her. If her practice were a rule, and the husbands virtues were to be measured by their wives' homeliness in attire; either fewer husbands would be thought virtuous than are, or more wives found soberly attired than are.⁷²

The Puritans, like all societies which seek the betterment of the world, laid particular stress upon the training and development of children. Even in the area of the idea of child training, the superiority of the male found its expression:

Children, in their first days have the greater benefit of good mothers, not only because they suck their milk, but in a sort, their manners also, by being continually with them, and receiving their first impressions from them. But afterwards, when they come to mature years, good fathers are more behooveful for their forming in virtue and good manners, by their greater wisdom and authority: and oftimes also, by correcting the faults of their mother's indulgences, by their severity.⁷³

follow therein, and not of that Holy Spirit, which saith, 'It is not good that man should be alone.'" John Cotton, A Help Meet. Or a Sermon, Preached at New-Castle in New-England, June 19th, 1694. At the Marriage of Mr. John Clark, and Mrs. Elizabeth Woodbridge (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen, 1699), p. 16. Cf. Morgan, op. cit. Note his chapter entitled "Puritan Love and Marriage," pp. 9-27.

⁷²Robinson, Works, I, 239.

⁷³Ibid., 244.

Puritan parents believed that severity and hardship were not incompatible with the proper development of children. They had greater fear of the effect of affection than discipline and correction. Robert Cleaver's proverb "Birch breaketh no bones,"⁷⁴ was popular. Children of sufficient age were often boarded with relatives or friends for the purpose of learning a trade and for the cultivation of manners and behavior in an atmosphere not likely to be indulgent:

It is natural for parents to love all their children; and best for them to be as equal towards all, as may be; reserving the bestowing of their best and greatest love, till they see, where God bestows his. And if so they cannot, or will not command their inordinate affections, as they should, yet it is wisdom to conceal them from their children, whom else they may hurt so many ways; as the ape is said, many times to kill her young ones by too strait embracing them.⁷⁵

The family was a major link in the chain of Puritan concerns. Their fears for their children in the Netherlands amid the influences of a contrary religious attitude provided one of the strongest motivations for the emigrations to the new world. They feared the invasion of the world into the sanctity of their principles and concerns more than the dangers of the hostile environment of a world whose greatest dangers lurked in the realm of physical survival and safety. Since the Bible used the illustration of the church as the bride of Christ, the Puritan regarded the marriage tie as the most binding agreement under heaven.

⁷⁴Cleaver, op. cit., p. 265.

⁷⁵Robinson, Works, I, 250.

VI. JOHN ROBINSON'S LITERARY BACKGROUND

If, as Francis Bacon stated, "reading makes a full man"⁷⁶ then John Robinson was of all men, a full man. His writings are replete with notations to the authors of all ages. The Essays in particular illustrate his enviable familiarity with the world of literature. He was well versed in the writings of both churchmen and "secular" figures. In the preface to the Essays Robinson states his purpose in crediting the authors of many of the quotations he inserts:

The names of the authors, specially known, out of whom gathered anything, I have, for the most part, expressed: partly to give them their due; and partly, that the authority of their persons might procure freer passage for their worthy and wise sayings, with others: and make the deeper impression of them in the reader's heart: in the method I have been neither curious, nor altogether negligent, as the reader may observe.⁷⁷

Unfortunately Robinson does not locate the sources of the quotations he uses. I concur with the hopelessness Robert Ashton expressed in his observation that: "No attempt has been made, . . . to verify them; the task would indeed, have been hopeless."⁷⁸

The authors to whom Robinson either refers or quotes are summarized under several categories as an illustration of his literary and intellectual acumen.

In the area of the Church Fathers and early Christian writers Robinson makes reference to the following: Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, d. 347; Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, d. 430; Basil, Bishop of

⁷⁶Francis Bacon, "Of Studies," Essays, Civil and Moral (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1909), pp. 128-129.

⁷⁷Robinson, Works, I, iii.

⁷⁸Ibid., I, v.

Caesarea, d. 379; Greek Church Father, d. 407; Cyprian, African Church Father, d. ca. 400; Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, d. 444; Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, d. 265; Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea and ecclesiastical historian, d. ca. 333; Gregory, Bishop of Constantinople, d. 389; Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch and Martyr, d. 115; Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons and disciple of Polycarp, d. 200; Isidorus, exegetical writer at Pelusium, d. 450; Lactantius, Church Father appointed by Constantine to tutor his son, d. 340; Justin Martyr, early Greek writer martyred in Rome, d. 165; Novation, presbyter of the church at Rome, who contended for greater purity in the church and was excommunicated in 251 and died in that year; Tertullian, Latin Church Father, d. 222; and Theodoret, ecclesiastical historian and commentator, d. 457.

Under the category of history he notes or makes reference to the following: Aemilius Paulus, French historian, d. 1529; Cato, Roman soldier and author, d. 148 B. C.; Fox, the martyrologist, d. 1587; Herodotus, Greek historian, d. 425; Josephus, Jewish historian, d. 95; Livy, Roman historian, d. 17; Philo-Judaeus, noted first century Jewish writer, d. 40; Plautus, Roman writer, d. 184 B. C.; Pliny, Natural historian, d. 79; Plutarch, historian and biographer, d. 140; Politian, Tuscan historian, d. 1494; Polybius, Greek historian, d. 121 B. C.; Suetonius, Roman historian, d. 66; Tacitus, Roman historian, d. 120; Virgil, Latin historian, d. 1595.

The following philosophers had their influence on John Robinson in spite of the time separating their eras: Agesilaus, King of Sparta, d. 362 B. C.; Anacharsis, Scythian philosopher, d. ca. 600 B. C.; Antisthenes, Athenian philosopher, and founder of the Cynics, d. 365

B. C.; Antoninus Marcus, philosopher and emperor, d. 180; Boethius, Roman philosopher and scholar, d. 524; Celsus, Roman physician and anti-Christian writer, d. ca. 200; Laertius Diogenes, Greek author, d. 222; Macrobius, Latin writer, d. 423; Martial, epigrammatic poet from Spain, d. 104; Menander, Greek poet, d. 291 B. C.; Pindarus, the prince of lyric poets, d. ca. 400; Plato, Athenian philosopher, d. 347 B. C.; Sallust, Latin author, d. 34 B. C.; Seneca, Roman philosopher, d. 65; Socrates, Athenian philosopher, d. 399 B. C.; Stoebus, John, Greek author of the fifth century; Terence, Roman poet, d. 159 B. C.; Thales, founder of the Ionic sect of philosophers, d. 545 B. C.; Varro, Roman writer, d. 29 B. C.

Robinson's literary familiarity was not limited to those who had lived long before his time. He quoted or referred to the following authors whose lifetimes fell within at least a few centuries of his own: Henry Ainsworth, English non-conformist, d. 1622; James Arminius, Leiden Professor and founder of the doctrine of Arminianism, d. 1609; Henry Barrow, non-conformist, d. 1593; Richard Bernard, Vicar of Worksop and Puritan antagonist, d. 1641; Theodore de Beza, biographer and successor of John Calvin, d. 1605; William Bradshaw, Puritan contemporary of John Robinson, d. 1618; Robert Browne, founder of the Brownists, d. 1633; Guil Bucer, learned 16th century divine; John Calvin, Geneva Reformer, d. 1564; Thomas Cartwright, Puritan professor at Cambridge, d. 1603; De Les Cluse, French preacher at Amsterdam; Comenius, Amsterdam divine, d. 1671; Desiderius Erasmus, continental scholar, d. 1536; John Fox, the martyrologist, d. 1587; Greenham, Puritan divine, d. 1591; John Greenwood, English non-conformist, d.

1593; Hugo Grotius, learned Delft Burgomaster, d. 1680; Francis Johnson, Puritan pastor at Amsterdam, d. 1618; Keckerman, German professor of philosophy, d. 1609; John Knox, Scottish reformer, d. 1572; Peter Martyr, Oxford divinity professor in the reign of Edward VI; Matthew Parker, Episcopal divine, d. 1575; William Perkins, Puritan divine of Cambridge, d. 1602; Anthony Sadeel, Hebrew professor at Geneva, d. 1591; John Smyth, Amsterdam separatist, who became a baptist, d. 1612; John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, d. 1575.

These compilations, though extensive, are by no means conclusive. Robinson was an omnivorous reader who familiarized himself with the literature of his chosen interest. The anonymous author of An Answer to John Robinson of Leyden⁷⁹ chided his university training because of the simple and forthright style of his writing. However, his wide acquaintance with the scholarly world as herein indicated should allay any question concerning the validity of the assertion of his Cambridge education.⁸⁰ The province of his thought is certainly greater than could be achieved by a man not having the opportunity of a thorough university involvement.⁸¹

⁷⁹Champlain Burrage, (ed.), An Answer to John Robinson of Leyden (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920). Cf. Champlain Burrage, New Facts Concerning John Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), p. 10.

⁸⁰The "Admission Book" of Corpus Christi College lists Robinson's entrance on April 9, 1592. H. Burgess, John Robinson Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, p. 35.

⁸¹The limited biographical data recorded on the foregoing pages was taken from Robert Ashton's edition of the John Robinson materials in the Index of Authors pages 509-513 and from Albert M. Hyamson, A Dictionary of Universal Biography (London: George Routledge & Sons,

VII. PRACTICAL COUNSEL

Robinson took great pleasure in concourse with the learned men of the world, whether living or dead. He held the universe of man's thought to be the province of his intellectual investigation. He was wise enough to learn something from every man. By his own admission, he states that he took great delight in the preparation of the Essays. That same pleasure is open to the reader who finds that the sincerest thoughts of the illustrious men of all time find affinity with his own feelings about the central issues of life.

Robinson regarded it a privilege to be in the presence of the great and stated: "There is in truth no greater recreation in the world, than to converse with wise men."⁸² Concerning those who fail to appreciate the opportunity of sharing the experience of one whose relationships have been broader than their own, he commented:

They who profit not in knowledge and wisdom by conversing with wise men, are unworthy of their company; and worthy to keep, or keep with, oxen and asses.⁸³

Robinson noted the common tendency to pass through life with little thought or concern for the events which transpire in the larger world. He saw in the art of observation the avenue to a richer and fuller life, "The High-way to wisdom Divine and human is to observe and consider the reasons and causes of things."⁸⁴

1916):

⁸²Robinson, Works, I, 86.

⁸³Ibid., I, 79.

⁸⁴Ibid., I, 84.

A fundamental problem being revived again and again by the proponents of a creedal type of religion is the urge toward an anti-intellectualism in religion. Robinson resented the reduction of religion to the belief in a creed or dogma. Propositional religion lacked the power and vitality of faith in the redemptive powers of the person of Jesus Christ. He raises a criticism against the Roman church in this respect which would have been equally applicable to the Anglican communion:

Papists call ignorance the mother of devotion; and so make reckoning, that, if they, the multitude especially, be ignorant enough, they are devout enough.⁸⁵

In Robinson's antagonism to the anti-intellectualism of the established churches we see an echo of his disdain for the illiterate, unlettered priests who served many of the parish churches. He laid the blame for the state of the church at the feet of the prelates and priests whose habits and examples gave the people little that was worthy of emulation:

Examples of superiors are strong cords to draw on others, either to good or evil: in which regard, it is rightly said, that great men have no small either virtues or vices: with which that of Austin consorts, the joy for the great is great, if they be good, because it is not for them alone.⁸⁶

Robinson followed the wisdom of the Scriptures which stated that "Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45), when he stated:

The tongue is called the index of the mind, and as by the index we know what is in the book; so do we by the speech what is conceived in the heart.⁸⁷

⁸⁵Ibid., I, 79.

⁸⁶Ibid., I, 94.

⁸⁷Ibid., I, 100.

He noted the apparently universal tendency of the fool to express himself freely while the wise are frequently reluctant to speak at all. He said: "Want of wisdom makes men, commonly, too forward in speaking, and over much wisdom too backward."⁸⁸ The following statement demonstrates the spirit of mediation which permeates much of Robinson's writing in his suggestion that a middle way must be found between the under and over use of speech:

Some have said that hurt never comes by silence, but they may as well say, that good never comes by speech: for where it is good to speak, it is ill to be silent. Besides, he that holds his tongue, in a matter that concerns him, is accounted as consenting. Indeed less hurt comes by silence, than by speech; and so doth less good.⁸⁹

Such a position is characteristic of John Robinson. Many of his contemporaries, Separatists and Puritans, wear well the description "Radical Reformer," but Robinson is more nearly described by the term "Reluctant Reformer." His concerns are as deep as those of his comrades, but his balance of mind, freedom from hostility, patience and gentleness in dealing with the abuse of his opponents, marks him a true Christian gentleman.

Robinson's writings glisten with bits of wisdom and perceptive insight. The reason for their popularity with the Puritan clergy is readily apparent. The Essays of all the works seem to have enjoyed the greatest popularity, being reprinted five times in the three decades following their original publication.

⁸⁸Ibid., I, 102.

⁸⁹Ibid., I, 106.

Concerning a good intention, he stated: "A good meaning no more sufficeth to make a good action, than a fair mark doth to make a good shot, by an unskillful archer."⁹⁰ The following illustrates his usage of progression in the defamation of the misuse of the beneficial:

All evil stands in the abuse of Good, and good things are abused commonly, wither when they are unmeasurably used; as it is said of wine, that the first cup quenches thirst, the second procures cheerfulness, the third drunkenness, and the fourth madness.⁹¹

Robinson advocated a simple, frugal life which maintained its emphasis on the realm of the spirit and the pursuit of truth. His observation that, "He, especially, if he be a poor man, and of small means, that will this world's goods win, must at his belly begin,"⁹² is in harmony with a similar observation made later by Benjamin Franklin, "A Fat kitchen, a lean will."⁹³

Another evidence of his humor is to be found in his chiding of the physicians:

Physicians, saith one, and truly, have this advantage above them of other professions, that the sun beholds their cures, and the earth covers their failings.⁹⁴

The problem of war, persecution, prejudice, violence and man's general inhumanity to man have marked the existence of the human family since the beginning of history. Robinson believed that the very structure of man made it evident that he was a creature designed for peace and friendship, yet he noted the invasion of other less desirable

⁹⁰Ibid., I, 110.

⁹¹Ibid., I, 121.

⁹²Ibid., I, 128.

⁹³Benjamin Franklin, "The Wisdom of Poor Richard," Poor Richard's Almanack (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1928), July 1733, p. 6.

⁹⁴Robinson, Works, I, 139.

qualities.

God, to show how peaceable man should be, hath denied him such instruments of offence, and natural weapons, as many other creatures are furnished withal; of which some have horns, some hoofs, some paws, some tusks, some talons: but alas, how hath sin armed man with hatred and malice, and they with the weapons of violence and destruction! So as more men are destroyed by men, than by all other creatures.⁹⁵

Robinson's observations concerning hostile relationships of much of the world's peoples, and his difficulties with the hierarchy of the establishment of which he considered himself a part may have influenced him to give consideration to the value and quality of true friendship. He had observed that one might love things other than men; that one might bear good will toward persons not known personally; but friendship can only be the product of mutual consent, arising from mutual love, and good will.⁹⁶ He believed that such a relationship should not be made lightly. Casual acquaintances could not truly be considered "friends." He expressed the kind of communion which binds hearts to hearts in true friendship as that which is achieved only after two persons, "have eaten a bushel of salt together."⁹⁷

To the man who enjoys such a relationship, no earthly thing is more delightful than the sweet society of wise and honest friends, whether for recreation after study, or labor; or communication in a prosperous state; or comfort in an afflicted.⁹⁸ "Wealth maketh many friends, and poverty trieth them; as the wind shows which clouds have rain in them, and which not."⁹⁹

⁹⁵Ibid., I, 155.

⁹⁶Ibid., I, 161.

⁹⁷Ibid., I, 160.

⁹⁸Ibid., I, 163.

⁹⁹Ibid.

Robinson noted the effect of the rancor of envy and suggested that men should do what they could to prevent envy in others:

The best remedy for preventing envy by others, is to carry a low sail in the most prosperous gale that can blow: and to ascribe the good a man hath rather to any other cause than to himself, or his wit, industry, or worth any way. Therein he least disparageth others that want it, and so frees himself best from their envy at him.¹⁰⁰

Along with friendship, Robinson touches upon false friendship which often takes the form of flattery. In his opinion, "Flattery is in all classes and persons a base sin, and which will make one man, dog-like, to fawn upon another for a morsel of bread."¹⁰¹

Religious faith gave Robinson a reason and purpose for existence. He believed such faith was in harmony with both his created purpose and his predestined future. Such faith gave him both his created purpose and his predestined future. Such faith gave him both assurance and hope that his life would lead to a worthwhile end and without such faith and hope he believed life would be futile:

Natural desires are infinite, but those arising from false opinion have no limits: as he that goes his right way, hath some end of his journey; he that wanders none.¹⁰²

Robinson sought that destination where he might dwell in the true presence of God, where truth would reward its pursuer, where the fulfillment of the will of God would be paramount in every man's mind, where no man would presume to usurp the divine authority. History has been unable to record his arrival at such a Utopia, but Robinson is remembered because of the quality of his journey. On his way to be

¹⁰⁰Ibid., I, 174.

¹⁰¹Ibid., I, 179.

¹⁰²Ibid., I, 218.

with God, he counted it his first responsibility to behave in a "God-like" fashion to every man. He accepted the kinship of all men with the divine. His practical wisdom about the amenities of life indicates his respect and reverence for the human spirit and the dignity of every man, a respect which is the ultimate test of all theology.

VIII. THE ESSAYS

Robinson's essays, of all his works, are the most enduring and of the greatest interest to the modern reader. They were first published in 1625, the year of his death, and appeared under the title, Observations, Divine and Moral. The essays may be compared with the wisdom literature of the Bible as to style and content. Robinson notes three sources for the work; the first is the Scripture itself, the second is the memorable sayings of wise and learned men whom he has either heard or read, and finally his own observations relative to the manners and behavior of men.

The literary form of the essay had come into popular usage prior to Robinson's adoption of it for his final work. Francis Bacon and the Frenchman, Michel de Montaigne, had used this style with much success shortly prior to Robinson's adoption of it.¹⁰³ Robinson's essays may easily take their place beside the productions of these more well known writers of short, pithy commentaries on the facts of

¹⁰³Michel de Montaigne, The essayes, or morall, politike discourses (London: Val. Sims, 1603); Francis Bacon, Essayes (London: Humphrey Hooper, 1597).

human life.¹⁰⁴

Robinson's essays describe his highest ideals of conduct. They are, for the most part, collections of shrewd observations on how men get along in life. Many elements of human behavior are considered from a moral standpoint. The essays cover an immense variety of topics and are written in a clear, concise, and, at times, epigrammatic style. Now, as when he wrote them, they come home to men's hearts because they reflect so well the feelings of every man.

A similarity between all the essayists is the answer they present to Pilate's piercing question, "What is truth?" They accept at face value the simple truth of Christ's answer, "I am Truth!"

¹⁰⁴Michel de Montaigne's Essays first appeared in 1580. Francis Bacon's first edition was published in 1597. These works, along with those of Robinson's, though all appearing in a relatively brief period of time, illustrate wide variations concerning the proper method to be used in the search for truth. Robinson, as a churchman, maintains faith with the Scriptures as the source of spiritual enlightenment and the ultimate test of truth. With this basis, Robinson frequently finds himself at odds with the establishment. Bacon, by contrast, placed his faith more in the authority of the established church in matters of religion and on observation for secular matters. Bacon endorsed James I's opposition to the preferment of Conrad Vorstius (see chapter II, p. 81) and he urged the United Provinces to deal harshly with him for the protection of the state. Francis Bacon, Letters and Life (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1868), IV, 313, fn 2. Montaigne stands upon a different foundation. His writings are marked by a pessimistic skepticism. For him, reason is the great source of truth. He believed that every seeker after truth had the right to exhaust the available sources of knowledge and come to his own decision. He held in low esteem those opinions which find their support only in fideism. Alan M. Boase, The Fortunes of Montaigne (London: Methuen, 1935), pp. v-lx. A generalization concerning these three authors might summarize them by pointing out that Robinson's Essays dwell upon the religious interests as the center of the life. Bacon is more concerned with behavior believing that "true ethics are but a hand maid to divinity and religion." (Bacon, Letters and Life, VII, 478.) Montaigne divorced ethics and religion and spoke of life in general terms without religious connotations. Boase, op. cit., p. 428.

That is to say, no man can truly know anything but himself. The knowledge of the self is as important as any other kind of knowledge, if not more so. The essays verbalize human behavior. They bring self-knowledge to the reader. The human being he discovers is so genuine, so true, that in him every reader discovers himself and at once feels at home.

Robinson obviously enjoyed his work on the essays. He states that the time spent has been "full, sweet, and delightful, and that wherein I have often refreshed my soul, and spirit."¹⁰⁵ It is in the essays that Robinson gives the truest and clearest picture of his own spirit. Here he writes with no thought of correcting an error. He makes no effort to silence a critic, or thwart an opponent. He has no thought of seeking a privilege from a magistrate or solving a theological dilemma. He merely opens his heart as if he were conversing with a trusty friend.

Of all Robinson's formal writings, the essays enjoyed the greatest popularity and the most extensive longevity. The first edition appeared in 1625 shortly following his death. The work was reprinted in 1628, 1629 and 1638. Robert Ashton notes the existence of a 1642 edition of which neither the Short Title Catalogue (in the Pollard and Redgrave or the Wing edition) nor the British Museum Catalogue mention. Burgess refers to the 1642 edition and a 1654 reprinting.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Robinson, Works, I, iii (Preface).

¹⁰⁶Burgess, op. cit., p. 299.

Robinson's insatiable thirst for knowledge, his unwearied industry and omnivorous appetite for those things which concerned him, resulted in the accumulation of the materials for this significant work. His other writings frequently sound like echoes of concerns which have lost their pertinency, but the essays are as alive and vital as when first penned. Here Robinson has drained his pen of the gall of controversy and filled it with the balm of Gilead.

The essays cover a wide variety of topics and range in length from a few paragraphs to several pages. They begin with "Man's Knowledge of God" and close with, "Death." In a number of cases he contrasts significant qualities such as his chapters on "Authority and Reason," and "Wisdom and Folly."

IX. ROBINSON'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Robinson's attitude toward the Anglican or Established church is loyal in every respect to the 1572 "Admonition to the Parliament." That document resounded with the concerns which were to echo for a century from Puritan pulpit and press. Its lofty purpose and principles were introduced with the following words:

Seeing that nothing in this mortal life is more diligently to be sought for, and carefully looked unto than the restitution of true religion and reformation of God's church: it shall be your partes (dearly beloved) in this present parliament assembled, as much as in you lyeth to promote the same, and to employ your whole labor and studie; not onely in abandoning al popish remnants both in ceremonies and regiment, but also in bringing in and placing in God's church those things only, which the Lord himself in his word commandeth.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas, Puritan Manifestoes (London:

The admonition continues with its plea that the Scriptures should become the foundation of all faith and practice. Nothing less would be sufficient for the establishment of the rule of God in England.¹⁰⁸

Robinson's separation from the established church is the strongest possible testimony of his personal regard for that institution. In this case the "why" of his attitude is more instructive than the "what." Puritans and Separatists were repeatedly charged with the sin of separation from the true church. Robinson contended, that the Puritans were not guilty of such an act. They, in fact, were the "True Church" which had separated itself from the "wicked world." Their act of separation was only proper. In the following paragraph, Robinson presents several reasons for his attitude toward the Anglican Communion:

But this I hold, that if iniquity be committed in the church, and complaint, and proof accordingly made, and that the church will not reform, or reject the party offending, but will on the contrary maintain presumptuously, and abet such impiety, that then by abetting that party and his sin, she makes it her own by imputation, and enwraps herself in the same guilt with the sinner.¹⁰⁹

When a church becomes unreformable, when its members are unable to alter the course of its apostasy, when it ignores the wise counsel

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1907), p. 8. An excellent source for the study of early separatism and Puritanism is Champlin Burrage, The Early English Dissenters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912).

¹⁰⁸William Haller, Elizabeth I and the Puritans (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 1.

¹⁰⁹Robinson, Works, II, 259.

of sister churches, it wipes its name from the roll of the true church of God and ceases to be a church of Christ. When such a condition exists, its rites and rituals become an abomination rather than a blessing in the sight of God.¹¹⁰

Richard Bernard criticized the Puritans for their separation from the Church of England, yet he did admit that there might be times when separation was justified. He lists the following conditions as justification for separation:

- 1) To separate from idols, false gods and idolators.
- 2) To separate from idols, even of the true God, such as Jereboam erected.
- 3) To separate from persons ceremonially, as in the times of the Gospel.¹¹¹

Robinson used these conditions against their author and claimed that the Church of England fulfilled them all:

. . . in your constitution, you are partly as the Egyptians in respect of your bondage: partly as the Babylonians in respect of your confusion; and partly as Jereboam's church in respect of your apostasy in your devised priesthood, sacrifices, and holy days: the Lord having appointed no such ministry as your priesthood, no such sacrifice as your service-book, no such holy days as your single and double feasts, which you have forged of your own hearts.¹¹²

¹¹⁰In 1600 Francis Johnson gave form to the Puritan objections to the Church of England in his list of ninety-one errors still uncorrected. Francis Johnson, An Answer to Maister H. Jacob his Defense of the Churches and Ministry of England (Middleburg, 1600), pp. 63-66. For a discussion on the Puritan ideal of a "pure church" see Edmund Sears Morgan, Visible Saints: the History of a Puritan Idea (New York: New York University Press, 1963), pp. 1-32.

¹¹¹Bernard, Christian Advertisements and the Councils of Peace p. 108.

¹¹²Robinson, Works, II, 268.

Regarding the ceremonially polluted, Robinson stated:

Who is now a leper, but he which hath the leprosy of sin arising in his forehead? Who hath an issue of blood upon him, but he in whose soul and body the issue of sin runneth unstopped? Who is the dead person now that may not be touched by pollution, but he that is dead in trespasses and sins? And who toucheth such an unclean person, if he that becomes and remains one body with him, by spiritual communion, and a member of him, touch him not?¹¹³

Robinson further suggested that if separation from persons who revile Christ be lawful, then it would be unlawful not to separate from those whose works declare that they remain in unbelief. Robinson contended that many of the members of the Church of England were not only profane in their habits, lewd in their conversation, but also persecutors of Christians--all while professing the name of Christ:

That the bishops make a show for Christ, all grant: and that they persecute true Christians, let your prisons be searched, and there will want no records: and if you yet will pass by the poor brethren of the separation, as the priest and Levite did the wounded man, which had fallen among thieves, Luke 10, and will take no knowledge of us, ask your own brethren, the godly ministers, with whose supply against us, you back your book; and I doubt not, but the suspensions and deprivations of the most of them for refusing the prelates' badges, and liveries, the surplice, tippet, and the like, will testify with us, the persecutions of the anti-christian prelacy, against Christians.¹¹⁴

Robinson regarded it as unthinkable that any should choose to remain in connection with such an organization:

And to conceive of a church, which is the body of Christ and household of God, not separated from the profane world, which lieth in wickedness, is to confound heaven and earth, and to agree Christ with Beliel, I John 5:19; and in truth, the most profane and dangerous error which, this day, prevails amongst them that fear God; and by which Christianity is more exposed to the contempt of Turks and Jews, than by any other evil.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Ibid., II, 269.

¹¹⁴Ibid., II, 270.

¹¹⁵Ibid., III, 129.

Robinson met the argument that the profane and wicked who frequent the churches were not really of the church, but only those who fear God and make conscience of their ways. He argued that it is absurd to defend reality by stating the ideal. If such were the situation, then the Corinthians could have suggested that the incestuous person was not really a member of the true church and therefore need not come under the condemnation of the church at all. He carried it a step further by the suggestion that if this were the case, then the greater part of the prelates and their assistants were not part of the true church because they were irreligious persons. Therefore:

Let all of them, then, that fear God, know and consider, that when they come to worship in the parish assemblies, they join themselves where God hath not joined them, and acknowledge that society for the true church of God and communion of saints, which he hath not sanctified for that purpose; that they offer their solemn sacrifices out of the true temple, made of lively stones, I Peter 2:5; Deuteronomy 7:5-7, where alone they should present them; that in eating of one bread, they make themselves one body with them, I Corinthians 10:17, and them members of Christ, who are, for the present, apparent limbs of Satan; and that, in saying, "Our Father" with them, they acknowledge them for the children of God, who, in the persuasion of their own consciences, are of their father, the devil, and do his lusts. John 8:44.¹¹⁶

Puritan charges of corruption within the Anglican Church were not limited to outbursts against the laity. Frequently the clergy provided examples of corruption. The practice of pluralism, absenteeism, the selling of livings and the giving of benefices tended to degrade the dignity of the ministry and open the door to unqualified and irreligious leadership. The Anglican hierarchy had an established

¹¹⁶Ibid., III, 130.

ideal for its clergy but it was seldom achieved.¹¹⁷

Richard Bernard claimed that the Anglican ministry was patterned after the outline of John 10.¹¹⁸ Robinson attacked that claim on every point and attempted to prove that the ministry of the Church of England stood condemned by the text rather than affirmed. Bernard claimed that Anglican ministers go in by the door, Jesus Christ.¹¹⁹ Robinson's reply was curt:

Let him prove, that the bishop, or patron, or either of them, is in Christ's place sent by him to choose ministers: or that they are the church, to which he hath committed the power of calling and choosing them, and answer the reasons brought to the contrary: otherwise his large proving will appear but a large boasting: and he will give men occasion to remember the proverb, "It is good beating a proud man."¹²⁰

The second property of the true ministry, according to the text, is that "the porter openeth to them." By this Bernard meant God's spirit working visibly in the church of God--the Church of England. Robinson countered by stating that there are many who, in the eyes of men, are true ministers. These, like Judas, have not come in at the call of God, but of their own accord. Like all hypocrites, they take

¹¹⁷Articles whereupon it was agreed by the Archbishop of Canterbury a. Other the Bishops (London: R. Jugge, 1575). This work was referred to in chapter one under the heading "The Role of Officers in the Church." It may be found in its entirety in the appendix.

¹¹⁸Bernard, Christian Advertisements, p. 143. Richard Bernard, Plaine Evidences The Church of England is Apostolicall: The Separation Schismaticall (T. Snodham, F. E. Weaver, A. W. Welby, 1610), pp. 301-303.

¹¹⁹Bernard, Christian Advertisements, p. 143. Bernard, Plaine Evidences, p. 301.

¹²⁰Robinson, Works, II, 407.

the call of God upon themselves. He also suggested that it was absurd to attempt to differentiate between the given "authority" and the person who exercised it. Robinson's understanding of the porter's work differed greatly from the Anglican position:

I do therefore rather think, that by the porter is meant God the Father, whose care and providence is over his flock, who therefore hath called and appointed his Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep.¹²¹

The place of the porter must be taken by a human figure.

Robinson believed that Christ passed the authority of the porter on to his apostles and that they in turn passed it to the churches to which they ministered. He asserted that the last place where the gift could be found would be in the Bishops of the Romish or English Church: "Christ would never have the wolves to appoint his sheep, their shepherd."¹²²

John's third quality of the true shepherd was that he calls his sheep by name. He takes notice of his people, of their growth in religion, he abides with them, true and faithful to his ordination. Robinson attacked this position from several sides. He objected to Bernard's failure to state that the sheep belong to the Shepherd, who is Christ, rather than the visible shepherd: "Christ saith not unto Peter, feed thy sheep, but feed my sheep."¹²³ He further stated that the very size of the province alone made it impossible for a Bishop of a whole diocese to have a pastoral relationship with his people. Secondly, if they were to observe the people's growth in religion, they would

¹²¹Ibid., II, 408.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Ibid., II, 409.

have nothing to do, because their people made no growth. He recognized that there might be a few sheep in the fold of the Bishop's flock, but he doubted that their number was very great. Finally he suggested that Bernard would have been wiser had he left out the section about the Shepherd abiding by his sheep, since the seat of the Bishop was far removed from the congregation.

A fourth characteristic of the true shepherd, according to Bernard, is to lead the sheep from pasture to pasture, from milk to strong meat.¹²⁴ Robinson issued a scathing denial to their success in doing this:

There are many fair and wholesome passages in the field of God's Word, into which you do not lead your sheep, no, nor as much as point to them with the finger: neither indeed dare you, because they are hedged in with human authority, your statutes and canons ecclesiastical. Nay all your care is to keep your people from the knowledge of them, lest they should break through those thorny hedges, at which you stick.¹²⁵

Bernard claimed to have "proved at large" the validity of the ministry of the Church of England by the tenth chapter of the book of John. He called it, "so strong an hold for him, as we /Puritans/ cannot overthrow it."¹²⁶ This challenge apparently appealed to Robinson. He meets each of Bernard's arguments in the foregoing passages and then returns to do business with each of them in a second concise paragraph:

¹²⁴Bernard, Christian Advertisements, p. 143. Cf. Bernard, Plaine Evidences, p. 302.

¹²⁵Robinson, Works, II, 409.

¹²⁶Bernard, Plaine Evidences, p. 302.

First then, all true shepherds are set over flocks of sheep to feed them. But the ministers in England were not set over flocks of sheep, but indeed over herds of swine, goats and dogs, with some few sheep scattered amongst them; which the wild and filthy beasts push, worry, and defile. Therefore the ministers of England are not true shepherds.

True shepherds enter in by the door, Christ, that is, by the means, which his apostles, at his appointment, have commended unto the churches. But the ministers in England enter into their charges by the presentation of a patron, the institution of a prelate, and the induction of an archdeacon, which is not the door opened by Christ, for the shepherd to enter by, but a ladder set up by antichrist whereby to climb over the fold.

The shepherd by his office is to feed and govern the flock, . . . but as feeding, that is, teaching, or preaching unto the people, as is his meaning, is no part of the parish priest's duty, but a casual and supererogatory work: so are they altogether stripped of government, and therefore no true shepherd of Christ's flocks.

Lastly, The Good Shepherd, seeing danger towards the sheep, will rather give his life than flee; where on the contrary, the hireling seeing the wolf coming, fleeth because he is a hireling; whereupon it followeth, that the minister's Mr. B. /Bernard/ chiefly means, leaving their flocks upon the Bishop's ungodly suspensions and deprivations, as upon the barking of a wolf, do evidently proclaim to all the world, that they are no good shepherds, but hirelings.¹²⁷

Continuing with the final argument, Robinson outlined the underlying resource of the minister who knows that his cause is just, that his life is in harmony with the will of God, and that he serves a cause greater than himself:

When they have assurance by the Word and Spirit of God, that he is the Author of their calling, then do they with patience, and comfort of the Holy Ghost, suffer such trials, and afflictions, as are incident thereunto: where on the contrary, wanting this assurance, they are soon discouraged even in the good things they do, if persecutions do arise; and being without the Lord's calling, no marvel though they want his comfort.¹²⁸

¹²⁷Robinson, Works, II, 410.

¹²⁸Ibid., II, 411.

Robinson deeply resented the Anglican polity which placed the Bishop-- the administrator, over the preacher. He considered the work of administration second in importance to the task of those who were entrusted with the daily handling of the Word of God. He saw this as the chief work of the ministry:

For if the preaching of the gospel be the principal work of the ministry, and to be preferred in the first place, then are not your provincial and diocesan Bishops of God, which have betrayed the principal order and office in your church for a less principal work, namely government; and are preferred to the highest and first place, not for the teaching of their dioceses and provinces, which were impossible, though they desired it, but for ruling of them. You say they are the successors of the apostles: but the chief work of the apostles' ministry was the preaching of the gospel, not the ruling, much less the lording, wherein your bishops' office standeth. The order which the apostle Paul hath left, is, that those elders, which labor in the Word and doctrine, should have special honor, and be above them which are employed in ruling, I Timothy 5:17: but this order Antichrist hath subverted, as being a course not only too base and laborious, but even impossible for him to honor his ministers by, as he desired, and hath affected; and hath procured not double and treble, but an hundred fold greater honor to be ascribed to ruling and government, than to preaching. And this is not the least part of that confusion wherein you stand, and against which you testify. 2. If the office of ministry or order of priesthood be of Christ, which consists not at all in preaching, as I have showed, but may stand without it, by the canons and laws of your church: not requiring it necessarily, as any essential property for the being, but only admitting of it as a convenient ornament for the well-being: commending indeed the person that useth it, but no ways justifying the office, which requireth it not. Yea, most evident it is, that the ministry of the church of England, considering it not only in the state and carriage of things, but specially in the civil and ecclesiastical laws wherein it is founded, consists more principally in wearing the surplice than in the preaching of the gospel.¹²⁹

Robinson noted a wide discrepancy between the claims of the Anglican Ordination service and the reality of the Anglican system.

¹²⁹Ibid., II, 384.

The "Ordinal" in the Book of Common Prayer clearly states, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy sacraments in the congregation where thou shall be lawfully appointed thereunto."¹³⁰ Robinson contended that the publication of the Book of Common Prayer with its homilies, published and confirmed by law for the use of ministers who might be unable to preach, gives ample indication that the ability to preach was not required of those who desired to share the Anglican Priesthood.¹³¹

Robinson recalled certain articles which had been in effect for almost half a century and stated in clear terms the minimum requirements which must be satisfied by those desiring entrance into the Anglican priesthood. They stipulated that ministers should hold at least a B.A. degree from one of the Universities; that he should possess the ability to defend his faith in the Latin tongue; or that he be brought up in a Bishop's house, even if his responsibilities had been only to act as porter or housekeeper. If a man possessed the gift of preaching and could win the favor of the Bishop he might also be ordained.¹³²

¹³⁰The Book of Common Prayer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902), p. 665.

¹³¹Robinson, Works, II, 373. John Greenwood had earlier expressed similar concerns for the rise of the Book of Common Prayer and the devised liturgies of the established church. John Greenwood, The Writings of John Greenwood (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962). Cf. pp. 12-15, 30-92 for articles entitled, "Reasons against Read Prayer" and "An answer to George Gifford's Pretended Defence of Read Praiers and Devised Litourgies."

¹³²Articles whereupon it was agreed

Aptness, or the ability to teach, was not a stated requirement. Nothing was said concerning a knowledge of the Scriptures and no standards were set to determine spiritual preparedness. If a man possessed any of the above requirements, and could gain the approval of the Bishop, then the patron or Archdeacon could introduce him to the congregation, which would in turn be compelled to receive him.¹³³

The law not only allowed a non-preaching ministry, but the prelates tended to encourage it as being more easily controlled. Individuals who raised the least objection to the standards set for the ministry were subject to severe abuse. No Anglican fault was more roundly criticized by the Puritans than the inability of the clergy to preach. The Puritans set much store by preaching and considered it the means which God had ordained for instructing the people in the great truths of salvation. In petitions, admonitions, and supplications to Parliament the Puritans complained of the "Dumme Doggs, Unskilful sacrificing priests, Destroying Drones, or rather Caterpillars of the Word."¹³⁴ The Puritans were not content to fire blanks at the Anglican Clergy. They compiled lists of the ministers to whom they objected and listed their shortcomings with candor.¹³⁵

The real problem, however, was not with the established standards, but with the prelates themselves who placed their greatest

¹³³Robinson, Works, II, 373.

¹³⁴Albert Peel, (ed.), The Second Parte of a Register (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1915), II, 211.

¹³⁵Ibid., II, 157-162.

concerns on matters far from the spiritual needs of the congregations. The Puritans contended that the people were profane, largely because the leadership failed to reflect ideals in any way superior to those exhibited by the populace. Just as the requirements for ministerial positions were disregarded, there were no standards for church membership which made any distinction between the people of the world and the people of God.

Robinson concluded his argument with a final depreciating summary of the service required of the minister of the Church of England:

The reading of the service book, in form and manner, the celebrating of marriage, churching of women, burying of the dead, conformity and subscription, are more essential to your ministry, and more necessarily required by the laws of your church both civil and ecclesiastical, than preaching of the gospel is. The wearing of the surplice, and signing of the cross in baptism, are of absolute necessity, without partial dispensation, yea, I may add volition of oath by the bishops: whereas preaching of the Word is no such necessary or essential duty, but a work casual, accessory and supererogatory, which may be done or undone, as the minister is able or willing, without any such absolute necessity, as is here pretended.¹³⁶

The Anglican Book of Common Prayer was a continual recipient of Puritan diatribe. The Book of Common Prayer had been prepared for the purpose of bringing uniformity to the Church of England.¹³⁷ In time it came to serve a different purpose. It became a crutch for indolent ministers, and finally a standard by which independent ministers could be judged. Puritans complained that the use of the

¹³⁶Robinson, Works, II, 374.

¹³⁷For information concerning the history of the Book of Common Prayer, see: Francis Procter and Walter Howard Frere, A New History of The Book of Common Prayer (third edition; London: Macmillan, 1920).

required services tended to rob the worship hour of its spontaneity and life. They contended that it presented a worship service foreign to that taught by the scripture. In time the "Prayer Book" became a symbol of almost everything which the Puritans opposed. In a Just and Necessary Apology¹³⁸ Robinson outlined his objections to the use of the written liturgies of the Book of Common Prayer.

The basis of his first objection was that the mien and manner of public worship was nowhere outlined in the Scriptures. Therefore no particular service of human devising could be given the impress of the Divine. Secondly, the Prayer Book contained a prayer to be offered in behalf of the King. Robinson considered this to be out of harmony with the spirit of the apostles who would have been more likely to pray against the King than for him. Finally, when Paul wrote:

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.
I Timothy 3:15,

he made no mention of instruction concerning a particular liturgy or service to be followed without deviation, even though this would have been an excellent opportunity had he felt the need for such a document.

Robinson's opponents brought three arguments against his refusal to abide by the stipulations of the Book of Common Prayer:

The first is, that David, and other prophets penned the book of Psalms for the mother church of Israel. The second, that Christ himself delivered to his disciples a certain form of prayer,

¹³⁸Robinson, A Just and Necessarie Apologie

commonly called, "The Lord's Prayer." The third that Moses from the Lord, Numbers 6, gave direction to Aaron, and his sons, in what form of words they should bless the children of Israel.¹³⁹

Robinson responded to this argument by stating that the authority of Christ, Moses, and the apostles in no way indicates that an ordinary Bishop or pastor has similar authority to prepare a liturgy which would be normative for all people. If the Bishops do have such power, then their power is indeed unlimited:

Why may they not be this argumentation, as well frame us a new canon of Holy Scriptures, considering that even these very forms, wherewith also they equalize their own, are parts, and portions of the same scriptures.¹⁴⁰

He also objected to the use of the Psalms in the place of prayers. By prayers, Robinson referred to the expressions of a broken and contrite heart pouring out its needs, its concerns and its feeling to the father. He notes that there are many Psalms which contain no prayer whatsoever. He reminds the reader that there is a vast difference between praying and singing. James 5:13 says that the afflicted should pray and that the merry should sing. In prayer, the pastor's voice alone is heard with the congregation joining for the amen. In song the entire congregation is heard with confusion of voices. The psalms were written for the admonition and encouragement of the reader, singing is for a person's own soul and those around him, but prayer is

¹³⁹Robinson, Works, II, 20.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., III, 21. Cf. Henry Jacob, A Defence of the Churches and Ministry of England (Middleburgh: Richard Schilder, 1599), pp. 26-28. Here Francis Johnson lists his ninety-one objections to the Church of England; and John Greenwood, An Answer to George Gifford's pretended defence of Read Prayers (London: 1590), p. 7-8.

to be directed to God. The Psalms were teaching devices prepared to convey information. People singing the Psalms both instruct and admonish themselves. Robinson observed that a person leaving a church during the singing might be asked by a stranger what the congregation was doing. Should he answer "praying" he would certainly be thought ridiculous, if not a liar. The Puritans believed in saying and singing the Psalms, but not as a replacement for prayer.

Robinson had strong feelings on Christ's purpose in giving the Lord's prayer. He took the fact that the two accounts in Matthew (6:9-13) and Luke (11:2-4) differ in their exact wording to be an indication that the prayer was given as an example of how one might pray rather than a set of prescribed words. Christ advocated secret prayer in the privateness of one's closet (Matthew 6:6), for a person in such circumstances to say "Our Father" would seem unnecessary. Finally he states that it is Christ's purpose only to point us to the subject whither our prayers should be directed.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹Robinson, Works, III, 22-23. Robinson's attitude concerning the usage of the Lord's Prayer reflects the typical Separatist-Puritan opinion. John Greenwood declared it unlawful to use the Lord's Prayer. He believed it to be a form by which prayer might be patterned, but not the words which every prayer should follow. See Greenwood, The Writings of John Greenwood, pp. 23, 42, 260-261. Cf. Henry Barrow who offers one of the most precise and inclusive criticisms of the use of the Lord's Prayer:

"Our reasons are; it was not to that end instituted by our saviour Christ, so much as to instruct us to pray, and direct and assure us in praier, etc. It was never so used by our saviour, his apostles and churches, who ever prayed according to their present wantes, as the Spirit gave utterance. The like rules (beside their examples and practise) they have given unto the churches, no where mentioning nor enjoining this or any other Scripture, to be used for their praier. We cannot arrive nor comprehend the riches and depth of

Robinson listed a number of other objections to the exclusive use of the Lord's Prayer. He first pointed out that the "Unhallowed Multitude" tend to say prayer, to read prayer and to hear prayer, but never really to pray. Such a statement was made in view of a definition of prayer which would describe it as an effort "to pour out the conceptions of a godly and devout mind unto God from faith and feeling of our wants, by the Holy Ghost."¹⁴² He then proposed that the Lord's Prayer was not a real prayer on Christ's part, but a teaching prayer. It would be unthinkable that Christ should include himself in the phrase, "Forgive us our Debts." The prayer was also intended to stand in marked contrast to the vain babblings of the prepared prayers, for prayer must demonstrate thought, objectivity, humility, and penitence. Its form and content should bear no resemblance to the nonsensical sounds and words which characterize the prayers of the non-Christian world.

that praier, without more particular explication and application. That prayer expresseth not our particular wantes, or estate of our heartes, neither do we understand those generall doctrines, by the /70/ bare saying or reading it over. This Scripture is not the grace of God's Spirit in us; it is not our wordes to God, but his unto us, etc. It edifieth not the whole congregation so that they may al mind one thing, or say, Amen. Therefore, and for all these reasons, it ought not and cannot be used of any Christian, either publicly or privatly, as their praier: as by many other reasons shall further apeare in the breief answere to this said doctor's argumentes."

Henry Barrow, The Writings of Henry Barrow (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), p. 372. Henry Ainsworth presents his belief that the Lord's Prayer is an example of prayer but not a form for repetition in Henry Ainsworth, An Apologie or Defence of such true Christians as are commonly (but unjustly) called Brownists (1604), pp. 29, 69.

¹⁴²Robinson, Works, III, 24.

Robinson believed that the prayer could be used properly if the supplicant realized that God had not limited him to the repetition of these words. If the supplicant realized that this was one prayer among many rather than the perfect prayer whose repetition accorded the speaker some form of merit, then its use would be justified.¹⁴³

The controversy over the acceptable form of liturgy was lengthy and bitter. The representatives of Anglicanism continually turned to the example of the authors of Scripture as authority for their own behavior. In response to the argument that Moses had given a precise outline to the form of liturgy to be used in the worship service, Robinson made the following reply:

That the composers and imposers of the liturgy now in use have not equal authority with Moses the man of God, nor are their writings in any way comparable with his. That Moses did not prescribe unto the priests a stint of words for blessing, much less to be read out of a book, but the substance of the thing, which by many arguments, save that I study for brevity, might be proved. If that were Moses' mind, and the Lord's by him, the minister were bound to the same form of blessing upon the Israel of God now, Galatians 6:16, which the church is.¹⁴⁴

Robinson further pointed out that Moses' instruction to the priests regarded words to be spoken to the people and not words to be offered to God. Obviously, Robinson saw a pointed difference between praying forthrightly and reading prayers.

We dislike all reading of prayer, in the act of praying, as inconvenient, yea, directly contrary to that act. In prayer we do pour out matter, to wit, the holy conceptions of the mind, from within to without; that is, from the heart to God: on the contrary, in reading, we do receive and admit matter from without to within; that is from the book, into the heart. Let him that prayeth do

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., III, 25.

that which he doeth, not another thing, not a diverse thing. Let the whole man, and all that he is both soul and body, be bent upon God, with whom he converseth. The eyes of the mind are lifted to God in prayer; and why not the eyes of the body also? Both, which, he that prayeth, by intending them upon a book, both depresseth and averteth God.¹⁴⁵

In addition to Robinson's concern for the "fervent prayer of a righteous man," there was a practical concern. If it was proper to read a prayer, would it not be proper to read the sermon? Robinson believed that the acceptance of a minister who read prayers and sermons prepared by another, obviated the need for an educated clergy. If reading be all that is required, then any person able to read would be qualified to lead the worship service. Such an admission opened the door of the Anglican parish to a set of readers which Robinson and his fellows sought to deny as being the ministry at all. He compared the ministry which offered up read sermons, prepared prayers and stereotyped liturgy to a familiar New Testament Parable:

If it would be just matter of shame to any earthly father, that his child, who desired of him bread, fish, or an egg, should need to read out of a book or paper, "Father, I pray you give me bread, fish, or egg"; how much more contumelious is it, to our heavenly father, and his Holy Spirit, wherewith he furnisheth all his children, especially his ministers according to their place, than an help so unworthy, and more babyish, and indeed the instrument of "a foolish shepherd," Romans 8:26; Jude 20; Zechariah 2:15; 12:10; namely a bare reader, with which kind of vermin Rome and England are pestered, should be used by such godly and learned pastors, as wherewith the reformed churches are furnished.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵Ibid., III, 26.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., III, 28.

X. THE CIVIL MAGISTRATES

Robinson presented his views on the relationship between the civil magistrate and the Christian citizen in A Just and Necessary Apology.¹⁴⁷ He writes within the context of a situation in which the magistrate tended to assume that his powers extended not only to the body of the subject, but also to his spirit and conscience. Subjects were not supposed to think; they were to accept what the King thought. Robert Burton wrote a book entitled The Anatomy of Melancholy in which he stated: "If the patron be precise, so must the chaplain be: if papistical, his clerk must be so or else be turned out."¹⁴⁸ The religious history of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tended to bear out such assumptions. Within a century England had officially changed her ecclesiastical allegiance several times. Under Henry VIII religious affections were transferred from Catholicism to the new Church of England. Under Edward the drift continued toward even further reforms. The five year reign of Mary reversed the tide and might well have returned England to the control of the Pope had its duration been longer. Elizabeth's interests were more political than theological, but during her forty-five year reign the shape of Anglicanism was formed and largely set. Through all the play and counter-play of monarchical devotions there appear to have been few

¹⁴⁷Robinson, A Just and Necessarie Apologie

¹⁴⁸Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy (Oxford: John Lichfield and James Short, 1621). Quoted by Christopher Hill, The Century of the Revolution, p. 77.

significant attempts on the part of the populace to resist the general move from Catholicism to the church under the authority of the crown to more liberal Protestantism to Catholicism and finally to the ancestor of modern Anglicanism.¹⁴⁹

Opposition to the crown on the basis of religion reached its highest level during the brief reign of Mary and resulted in the exile of many whose allegiance to Protestantism was greater than their love for Rome. Under Elizabeth, opposition was controlled by zealous archbishops and prelates. The strength of dissent was never measured in numbers so much as in the intensity of feeling motivating many whose religious concerns cost them their lives. However, for the majority of the population the shift from one persuasion to another seems to have been accompanied by no significant trauma. Whether the explanation is to be found in the population's respect for their leaders, or in the nominal quality of their faith, remains as an open question.

Robinson believed in the strict separation of the church and the state.¹⁵⁰ He regarded the religious faith of the magistrate to be

¹⁴⁹J. W. Allen offers an excellent discussion on the doctrine of non-resistance in J. W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (London: Methuen, 1961), pp. 125-133.

¹⁵⁰Such beliefs put Robinson in opposition to the theory of the Divine Right of Kings which was first designed to support the claims of the crown against papal authority as much as against constitutionalism. The theory freed the crown from the authority of the Pope, but that freedom was soon claimed by every minority to express their political right. F. J. C. Hearnshaw, The Social or Political Ideas of Some Great Thinkers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (London: George G. Harrop, 1926), pp. 105, 106. Cf. G. P. Gooch, Political

of little significance as it related to his civil duties. The position of the magistrate was ordained of God. To him had been given the obligation to maintain order and to care for the interest of his subjects to the best of his ability. The nobility of his rule did not depend upon his religious profession, but rather upon the basic quality of his person. The acceptance of Christianity would not enhance his civil power, only sanctify his person:

The prince rules over his subjects as he is a prince, and they subjects simply, not as faithful or Christian, he or they. Only Christ, the Lord of our faith, hath the faithful, for his subjects: "neither are the subjects of kings, as subjects, any part of the church, but of the kingdom."¹⁵¹

Robinson's antipathy toward the parish system of Anglicanism whereby geography constituted the basis of church membership, may be seen in the above paragraph. Robinson had no intention of accepting the faith of the magistrate who happened to control the area in which he was living. He would not have been in sympathy with the terms of the Peace of Westphalia which left the provinces free to follow Protestantism or Catholicism according to the persuasion of their princes.¹⁵²

Thought in England from Bacon to Halifax (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1929), p. 21.

¹⁵¹Robinson, Works, III, 62.

¹⁵²Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1956), p. 350. "The Peace of Westphalia, October 27, 1648, provided that Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics should have equal religious and civil rights. The religion of each state was to be Protestant or Catholic according to its position in 1624, the "normal year." But the princes, and not the people, were to decide the kind of religion.

Robinson's Justification of Separation is a lengthy and argumentative account of his grounds for congregationalism. The most original thing about the work is his dismissal of the distinction between things important and things indifferent. Robinson believed that for a religious man there could be no such category as things indifferent. His world was more black and white than could allow a ceremony that was indifferent. Either it was good or it was wrong.¹⁵³ Robinson, however, did stand out from his comrades in an admission given just before his death in his A Treatise of the lawfulness of Hearing of the Ministers in the Church of England which was written in 1625 and published in 1634. Here Robinson suggests that the "real church" is invisible and numbers its members from all congregations.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³J. W. Allen, English Political Thought (London: Methuen, 1938), pp. 151-152.

¹⁵⁴Robinson, Works, III, 339-378. Robinson's breadth of thought was not universal. Cf. Francis Johnson, Certain Reasons and Arguments Proving that it is not lawfull to Heare or have any spiritual communion with the present ministerie of the Church of England (Amsterdam: 1608).

"The First Reason: All are bound in the Worship of God to hear and communicate only with that ministerie which Christ hath given, and set in his church, for that work. But the present Ministerie of the Church assemblies of England is not that which Christ hath given, and set in his church, for the work of the ministry. Therefore it is not lawful for any in the worship of God to hear or communicate with the present ministry of the Church assemblies of England.

"The Second Reason: No one may heare or have any spiritual communion with the Ministry of Antichrists Apostate: But the present ministerie of the Church-assemblies of England is the ministerie of Antichrists apostasie: Therefore none may heare or have any spiritual communion with the present Ministerie of the Church assemblies of England.

Robinson considered the designation "prince and subject" to be appropriate only in the realm of the state. He believed that in Christ there is neither servant nor freeman, neither magistrate or subject, but all are one in him. Therefore in the civil realm the religion of the subject and magistrate is of no consequence.¹⁵⁵ The authority of the magistrate is God given and the subject is bound to obey him in all matters not involving a violation of conscience.

The magistrate may demand that which is in harmony with the will of God, or he may prescribe that which is contrary to it. Should the demands of the magistrate be contrary to the subject's opinion of

"The Third Reason: The ministerie of Christians which is opposed against and exalted above the holy things, Ministerie, and ordinances of Jesus Christ, that is the Ministerie of Antichrists apostasie. But the present Ministerie of the Church-assemblies of England is the Ministerie of Christians opposed against and exalted above the holy things Ministerie and ordinances of Jesus Christ. Therefore the present Ministerie of the Church-assemblies of England is the Ministerie of Antichrists apostasie."

John Robinson's tolerance was shared by his son. Cf. Frederick James Powicke, "John Robinson and the Beginning of the Pilgrim Movement," *Harvard Theological Review*, XIII (1920), 252-289. Powicke seeks to limit his article to a discussion of John Robinson's contribution to the Pilgrim Movement. He challenges Roland Usher's, The Pilgrims and their History (New York: Macmillan, 1918), on several points concerning the severity of the persecution of the Puritons. He praises John Robinson's contribution to the tolerance of the Plymouth Colony and points out the fact that Robinson's son, Isaac Robinson, preferred disfranchisement to being a party to bigotry when the Plymouth Colony joined other New England colonies in the harassment of the Quakers.

¹⁵⁵Christopher Morris discusses the problems involved when a magistrate goes beyond the honest realm of his authority. He suggests that his God given authority in the realm is prescribed by law and that there are legal means to remove the magistrate who misuses his power. Christopher Morris, Political Theory in England, Tyndale to Hooker (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 146-147.

God's will in the matter, then the subject is bound to bear patiently the magistrate's displeasure at his disobedience, even if the penalty be severe.¹⁵⁶

Robinson offered a general rule that people tend to take an attitude toward tolerance of religion in accordance with what seems most appropriate to their own situation. The person of a minority group will proclaim the virtues of toleration, while the pastor of the dominant faith may well oppose it.¹⁵⁷ Robinson believed that it is of human right and natural liberty for every man to worship what he thinketh God. He pointed out that no man can be forced to be a Christian against his will, for God will not be worshipped by the unwilling. He looked to the day when magistrates might realize that it is not necessary to approve of all that one tolerates. His view included the belief that societies are not bettered by force and that God has reserved to himself the privilege of urging the conscience in his own way. Men profess true religion only when God has first worked in their hearts.¹⁵⁸

Robinson drew a distinction between civil and spiritual responsibilities. It was the responsibility of the magistrate to constrain the populace to outward acts of justice, honesty and the like, even

¹⁵⁶Robinson, Works, III, 62-63. Cf. Morris, op. cit., p. 162. The 1572 "Admonition to Parliament" declared that the combination of civil and ecclesiastical offices was against the Word of God. "Admonition to Parliament" 1572 see Frere, op. cit. Cf. H. J. Laski, English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), pp. 34-35.

¹⁵⁷Robinson, Works, I, 40.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

though the people be destitute of any of the inward virtues, for these serve properly to preserve the civil societies over which the magistrates are kings. The society obtains its proper ends if all things are done decently and in order, whether the people are willing or not.

Religious values must, however, be pursued in another way. For the proper end "is attainable but by faith, and devotion in the heart of the doers."¹⁵⁹ Robinson doubted the widespread belief that many who at first serve God by compulsion come after to serve him willingly and freely. He believed that even the best intentions failed to justify violence and that compulsion has made more atheists and hypocrites than it has ever converted:

Many . . . being at first constrained to practise against conscience, lose all conscience afterwards. Bags and vessels overstrained break, and will never after hold anything. Yet do I not deny all compulsion to the hearing of God's word, as the means to work religion, and common to all of all sorts, good and bad.¹⁶⁰

Robinson made a plea for the restraint of violence and misunderstanding. He pointed out that there could not be found a church-state in which there were not many people motivated by the spirit of Antichrist; and that in the worst sect there must be at least a few motivated by Christ, true members of the spiritual body. To deal rigorously with these individuals would be more to the pleasure of Christ's enemy, than to Christ himself.

The magistrate receives his right to rule from God. Hopefully his faith may serve to sanctify and direct his leadership. True worship for the magistrate, is to use his throne of power to the glory

¹⁵⁹Ibid., I, 41.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., I, 41, 42.

of God.¹⁶¹

The thoughts and opinions which John Robinson reflected concerning his world are indicative of the basic moods of the Puritan and Separatist movements. Both were marked with high ideals of integrity, concern for service to the community, and the belief that they could effect positive changes in society. Their preachers taught the doctrine of spiritual equality: one good man was as good as another, and better than a bad peer, bishop or king. Nothing else really mattered. This was a doctrine which gave men the courage to fight tenaciously, and if necessary alone for what they believed to be true. They placed a high value on conscience and thus promoted the doctrine of the primacy of the individual and the right of every man to live by his convictions. The result of their concerns is manifested in the nation which has called itself "The land of the free and the home of the brave." While that freedom is today broader than they conceived, its security is still to be found within the context of the conscience and conviction and concern which marked their lives.

¹⁶¹Ibid., III, 275.

APPENDIX

THE CANONS OF 1604

XIV The Prescript Form of Divine Service to be used on Sundays and Holy-days.

The Common Prayer shall be said or sung distinctly and reverently upon such days as are appointed to be kept holy by the Book of Common Prayer, and their Eves, and at convenient and usual times of those days, and in such place of every Church as the Bishop of the diocese, or Ecclesiastical Ordinary of the place, shall think meet for the largeness or straitness of the same, so as the people may be most edified. All ministers shall likewise observe the Orders, Rites, and Ceremonies prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, as well as in reading the Holy Scriptures, and saying of Prayers, as in administration of the Sacraments, without either diminishing in regard of preaching, or in any other respect, or adding any thing in the matter or form thereof.

XXXIV The Quality of such as are to be made ministers.

No Bishop shall henceforth admit any person into Sacred Orders, which is not of his own diocese, except he be either of one of the Universities of this realm, or except he shall bring Letters Dismissory (so termed) from the Bishop of whose diocese he is; and desiring to be a Deacon, is three and twenty years old; and to be a Priest, four and twenty years complete; and hath taken some degree of school in either of the said Universities; or at least, except he be able to yield an account of his faith in Latin, according to the Articles of Religion approved in the Synod of the Bishops and Clergy of this realm, one thousand five hundred sixty and two, and to confirm the same by sufficient testimonies out of the holy Scriptures; and except moreover he shall then exhibit Letters Testimonial of his good life and conversation, under the seal of some College in Cambridge or Oxford, where before he remained, or of three or four grave Ministers, together with the subscription and testimony of other credible persons, who have known his life and behaviour by the space of three years next before.

J. V. Bullard, Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical (London: Faith Press, 1934), pp. 12, 38. Cf. Constitutions and Canons (London: Clarendon Press, 1923).

Articles concerning Predestination from the Genevan Codex

Before the first man was created, God in his eternal counsel had determined what he willed to be done with the whole human race.

In the hidden counsel of God it was determined that Adam should fall from the unimpaired condition of his nature, and by his defection should involve all his posterity in sentence of eternal death.

Upon the same decree depends the distinction between elect and reprobate: as he adopted some for himself for salvation, he destined others for eternal ruin.

While the reprobate are the vessels of the just wrath of God, and the elect vessels of his compassion, the ground of the distinction is to be sought in the pure will of God alone, which is the supreme rule of justice.

While the elect receive the grace of adoption by faith, their election does not depend on faith but is prior in time and order.

As the beginning of faith and perseverance in it arises from the gratuitous election of God, none are truly illuminated with faith, and none granted the spirit of regeneration, except those whom God elects. But it is necessary that the reprobate remain in their blindness or be deprived of such portion of faith as is in them.

While we are elected in Christ, nevertheless that God reckons us among his own is prior in order to his making us members of Christ.

While the will of God is the supreme and primary cause of all things, and God holds the devil and the godless subject to his will, nevertheless God cannot be called the cause of sin, nor the author of evil, nor subject of any guilt.

While God is truly wrathful with sin and condemns whatever is unrighteousness in men since it displeases him, nevertheless all the deeds of men are governed not by his bare permission but by his consent and secret counsel.

While the devil and the reprobate are ministers and organs of God and promote his secret judgments, God nevertheless in an incomprehensible way operates in and through them, so that he restrains nothing of their wickedness, just because their malice is justly and rightly used to a good end, while the means are often hidden from us.

They are ignorant and malicious who say that God is the author of sin, since all things are done by his will or ordination; for they do not distinguish between the manifest wickedness of men and the secret judgments of God.

Jean Calvin, Theological Treatises (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), XXII, 179-180.

The True and the False Church

The righteous men they shall judge them after the maner of harlots and after the maner of murtherers, for they are harlots and blood is in thier hands: Ezekiel 23:45.

Before we can judge the false church, it is expedient that we discern the true church, which is thus described in the Scriptures. The true planted and rightlie established church of Christ is a companie of faithfull people; seperated from the unbelievers and heathen of the land; gathered in the name of Christ, whome they trulie worship, and redily obey as thier only king, priest, and prophet; joyned together as members of one bodie; ordered and governed by such officers and lawes as Christ in his last will and testament hath thereunto ordeyned; all and each one of them standing in and for thier christian libertie to practise whatsoever God hath commaunded and revealed unto them in his holie word within the limites of their callings, executing the Lorde's judgements against all transgression and disobedience which ariseth among them, and cutting it off accordinglie by the power which thier Lord and King, Christ Jesus, hath comitted unto them.

Now who so shall measure thies parish assemblies, as they generally stand in England, by this rule, shall evidently finde them in everie point so transgressing and defective, as he that hath eyes to see, or but a will to search, cannot be deceived or mistake these parish churches for the true churches of Christ. Thies parishes consisting of a company of prophane and ignorant people; gathered by the sounde of a bell in the name of antichrist; worshipping God after a false and idolatrous manner; denying all obedience unto Christ in his three offices as thier only king, priest, and prophet; lyving in disorder among themselves; standing in confusion, being disordered and overruled by such lawes and officers as the pope left and not as Christ left; standing in bondage to the Romish courts and canons; having no power to execute the Lorde's judgements or to redresse the least sinne or transgression amongst themselves, but are driven to the comis-saries' courts, and so cast out Satan by the power of Satan.

1. Thier churches consiste not of a company of faithfull people, but of a multitude of prophane people. Therefore they are not the true church.
2. They have made no seperation from the heathen of the land, but all are received and reteyned in the bozome of thier churches: Therefore: etc.
3. They are not gathered in the name of Christ, but in the name of antichrist, whom they obey as shall afterward appeare. Therefore, etc.

4. They worship not God trulie, but after a false and idolatrous manner, as witnesseth thier popish leiturgie, thier stinted booke of thier common prayer. Therefore, etc.
5. Thei receive not, nor obey not Christ as thier king, priest, and prophet. Therefore, etc.

Not as thier king; rejecting his government and receiving and standing under the antichristian yoake of thier popish government.

Not as thier priest; sacraligiously prophaning his name with thier idolatrie, prostituting his blood; and making him a priest and sacrifice to infidells and the most wicked offenders.

Not as thier prophet; giving no obedience to his worde, using it as a mantill to cover thier sinne, rather than as a rule whereby to direct thier lives, not seeking a true ministrie but mainteyning a false, of which sorte the wholl ministrie of the land is, which are permitted to teach in thier publicke places, to whome they give eare.

6. Thier people are not kint /knit/ together as members each of other in one congregation, but both rove and goe, assemble, and departe, at thier pleasure when they will, whether they will, and as they will themselves; as also live in continuall disorder.
7. Thies parishes are not ordered and governed by such officers as Christ hath appointed to his church. They have no true pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, releevers. But insteade of thies they remaine most servilely subject to the antichristian government of thier popish arch-bishops, bishops, chauncelors, archdeacons, deanes, commissaries, doctors, proctors, advocats, notaries, regesters, pursevants, cursetors, summers, etc. And from the apostolicall seat of the bishops, they receve as antechristian and false a ministrie, as thier parsons, vicars, curates, hirelings, lecturers, mercenarie preachers, etc., which together with this people stand bounde and subject to thies bishops and thier popish courts, of High Commission, of Faculties, of Arches, of Prerogative, of Delegats, of thier Commissaries, etc. Therefore, etc.
8. Thies assemblies are not ruled by the Olde and Newe Testament, but by the canons, injunctions, and decrees of thies antichristian and popish courts. Therefore, etc.
9. Thies people stand not in and for their christian lybertie but all of them remaine in bondage to thies Aegyptian and

Babilonish yoakes, yeilding obedience unto thies courts and their cannons. Therefore, etc.

10. Thies assemblies have not the power which Christ hath given unto his church unto the world's end, and all the powers in earth and hell cannot take from them; viz., to binde and loose and to reforme things that are amisse, but are driven to the commissary courts. Therefore, etc.
11. Thies assemblies cast out Satan by the power of Satan, namely, by thies impes of antichrist, the bishop's commissaryes and priests. Therefore they are not, and for all their /sic, thies?/ reasons severall and joyned, cannot be held in anie christian judgement, the true churches of Christ.

John Greenwood, The Writings of John Greenwood (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), pp. 98-101.

Articles whereupon it was agreed by the most reverend father in
God the Archbishop of Canterbury, & and other the Bishops
(Published by the Queen Maiesties authoritie, 1575)

Articles

That none shall be made Deacon or minister hereafter, but only such as shall first bring to the Bishop of that Diocese, from men known to the same Bishop to be of sound religion, a testimonial both of his honest life, and his professing the doctrine expressed in the Articles of religion, which concern the confession of the true Christian faith, and the doctrine of the Sacraments, comprised in a book imprinted, intituled, Articles, whereupon it was agreed by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy in the convocation holden at London, in the year of our lord 1562 for the avoiding of the diversities of opinions, and the establishing and consent touching true religion, put forth by the Queens authority. And which also shall then be able to answer and render to the same Bishop an account of his faith in Latin, agreeable and consonant to the said articles. And that every such Deacon shall be of the age of twenty three years, and shall continue in that office the space of a whole year at the least, before he shall be admitted to an order of priesthood, and every such Minister shall be the full age of twenty four years. And that neither of those orders shall be given, but only upon a Sunday or Holyday, and in the face of the church, and in such manner and form, as with all such other circumstances, as are approved by the book intituled, The form and manner of making and consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

Item, that no Bishop shall give either of the said orders to any that be not of his own diocese (other than graduates, resident in either of the universities) unless they be admitted under the hand and seal of that Bishop of whose diocese they are and not upon letters admissary of any Chancellor, or other officer to any Bishop.

Item, that unlearned Ministers heretofore made by any Bishops, shall not hereafter be admitted to any cure or spiritual function, according to the Queen Majesties Injunction in that behalf, for which purpose the Bishop shall cause straight and diligent examination to be used in the admission of all Curates to the charge of any cure.

Item, that diligent inquisition be made in every diocese for all such as have forged or counterfeit letters of orders, that they may be deposed by the Commissioners ecclesiastical.

Item, that the Bishops by their letters do certify one to another the names of such counterfeit ministers, to the end they be not suffered to serve in any other diocese.

Item, that from henceforth none shall be admitted to any orders ecclesiastical unless he do presently show to the Bishop a true presentation of himself, to a benefice then void within the diocese or jurisdiction of the said Bishop, or unless he likewise show to the said Bishop a true certificate, where presently he may be placed to serve some cure within the diocese or jurisdiction, or unless he be placed in some Cathedral or collegiate Church, or College, or unless the Bishop shall forthwith place him in some vacant benefice or cure, or unless he be known to have sufficient patrimony or livelihood of his own.

Item, that none shall be admitted to any dignity or benefice with cure of souls, unless he be qualified according to the tenor of the first article: and if any such dignity or benefice be of the yearly value of thirty pounds or above, in the Queens books unless he shall be a doctor in some faculty, or a Bachelor of divinity at the least, or a preacher, lawfully allowed by some Bishop within this realm, or by one of the Universities of Cambridge or Oxford, and shall give open trial of his preaching before the Bishop or Ordinary, or some other learned men appointed by him, before his admission to such dignity or benefice: and nevertheless, where the stipends or livings be very small, there to choose and admit of the best that can be found in such case of necessity.

Item, that all license for preaching granted out by any Archbishops or Bishops within the province of Canterbury, bearing date before the eighth of February, 1575, be void and of none effect: and nevertheless, all such as shall be thought meet for that office, to be admitted again, without difficulty or charge, paying nothing for the same.

Item, that every Bishop take order, that able preachers within his diocese, earnestly and with diligence teach their auditors sound doctrine of faith and true religion, and continually exhort them to repentance and amendment of life, that they may bring forth the fruits of faith and charity, and be liberal in alms and other good deeds commanded by God's word. And that none be admitted to be a preacher, unless he be first a deacon at the least.

Item, that every Bishop in his diocese, shall with all expedition take order that the Catechism allowed, be diligently taught to the youth in every parish Church, and that the Homilies (where no sermons be had) be duely read in order, as they be prescribed, every Sunday and Holyday.

Item, that every Bishop shall like wise take order within his diocese, that every Parson, Vicar, Curate, and stipendarie priest being under the degree of the Master of Art, and being no preacher, shall provide and have of his own, within two months after warning given to him of them, the new testament, both in Latin and English, or Welsh, and shall confer daily one chapter of the same, the Latin and English or Welsh together. And that Archdeacons, Commissaries and Officials in their synod and visitations, shall by their discretion appoint to every of the said Parsons, Vicars, Curates, and stipendarie priests, some certain care of the New Testament to be known without book, otherwise to be travailed in, as shall be thought most convenient to the said Archdeacons, Commissaries, or officials: and shall exact a rehearsal of the same, and examine them how they have profited in the studie thereof at their next synodes and visitations, or such other time or times, as to them shall be thought meet.

Item, that from henceforth there be no commutation of any penance, by any having ordinary jurisdiction ecclesiastical, or any their officers or deputies, into any excessive fine pecuniarie, unless the same be done upon great and urgent causes by the consent of the Bishop of the diocese, declared in writing, and under his hand and seal.

Item, that all Archdeacons, and others which have ordinary jurisdiction ecclesiastical and their officers and deputies, shall call before them all such person and persons, as shall be detected or presented before them, or any of them, of any ecclesiastical crime or fault, and shall use all means by law prescribed, to convince and punish such as be found to be offenders, effectually, upon pain of suspension from his or their office.

God save the Queen.

John Whitgift, Articles whereupon it was agreed by the most reverend father in God the Archbishop of Canterbury, & and other the Bishops (London: Richard Jugge, 1575). (STC 4582). Edited by the author.

The Trial of Mr. White

January 18, 1573. Mr. White, a substantial citizen of London, for not frequenting the parish Church;--some years imprisonment.

L.C.J. Who is this?

White White, a'nt pleased your honour.

L.C.J. White! as black as the Evil.

White Not so, my Lord, one of God's Children.

L.C.J. Why will you not come to your parish church?

Mast. Req. What if the queen should command to wear a grey frize gown, would you come to church then?

White That were more tolerable, than that God's ministers should wear the habit of his enemies.

L.C.J. How if she should command to wear a fool's coat and a cock's comb?

White That were very unseemly, my Lord, for God's ministers.

L.C.J. I swear by God thou art a very rebel, for thou wouldst draw thy sword, and lift up thy hand against thy Prince if time served. Take him away.

White I would speak a word, which I am sure will offend, and yet I must speak it. I heard the name of God taken in vain. If I had done it, it had been a greater offence than that I stand here for.

L.C.J. You shall be committed, I warrant you.

White Pray, my Lord, let me have justice. I am unjustly committed, I desire a copy of my presentment.

L.C.J. You shall have your head from your shoulders!--have him to the gate-house.

White I pray you commit me to some prison in London, that I may be near my house.

L.C.J. No Sir, you shall go thither.

White I have paid fines and fees in other prisons--send me not where I shall pay them again.

L.C.J. Yes, marry shall you. This is your glory.

White I desire no such glory.

L.C.J. It will cost you twenty pounds, I warrant you, before you come out.

White God's will be done.

John Southerden Burn, The High Commission (London: J. Russell Smith, 1865), p. 22.

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